THE SWORD

AND

WOMANKIND

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THE SWORD AND WOMANKIND:

. . BEING A . . STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE . . . OF . . .

"THE QUEEN OF WEAPONS" UPON THE MORAL AND SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN. ADAPTED FROM ED. DE BEAUMONT'S "L'EPÉE ET LES FEMMES," WITH ADDITIONS AND AN INDEX BY . . . . . ALFRED ALLINSON, M.A., OXON., AND AN ETCHED FRONTISPIECE BY ALBERT BESSÉ.

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FOREWORD

Many books exist about Fencing and Sword-Exercise, but I wish it clearly to be understood that the present work is **not** a new one of this sort. My work treats essentially of the Influence of the Sword upon the Social and Moral Status of Womankind. « **The History of the Sword** » has been with truth described as « **the History of Humanity** ».

Sir Richard Burton finely said : — From days immemorial the « Queen of Weapons, a creator as well as destroyer, carved out history, formed the nations, and shaped the world. She

decided the Alexandrine and the Caesarian victories which opened new prospects to human ken. She diffused everywhere the bright lights and splendid benefits of war and conquest, whose functions are all important in the formative and progressive processes. It is no paradox to assert *La guerre a enfanté le droit :* without War there would be no Right. The cost of life, says Emerson, the dreary havoc of comfort and time, are overpaid by the vistas it opens of Eternal Law reconstructing and uplifting society : it breaks up the old horizon, and we see through the rifts a wider view.

In knightly hands the Sword acknowledged no Fate but that of freedom and free-will : and it bred the very spirit of chivalry, a keen personal sentiment of self-respect, of dignity, and of loyalty, with the noble desire to protect weakness against the abuse of strength. The knightly Sword was ever the representative idea, the present and eternal symbol of all that man most prized, courage and freedom. The names describe her quality : she is *Joyeuse*, and *La Tisona :* he is *Zu-l-Fikar* (sire of splitting) and

Quersteinbeis, biter of the mill-stone, — the weapon everywhere held to be the best friend of bravery, and the worst foe of perfidy, the companion of authority, and the token of commandment, « **the outward and visible sign of force and fidelity, of conquest and dominion, of all that Humanity wants to have and wants to be.** »

The present study, — forming really only the first part of a more extensive work, the General History of the Sword in Europe, — treats as a matter of philosophical speculation of the ancient co-relationships and connivance of beautiful and famous women with the nobility of the sword and the foil, the whole subject being regarded ouly under its more general aspects.

To support and justify my point of view, I have had to fortify myself with many written proofs. These I have gathered together one by one and then brought into co-ordination with a scrupulous exactitude and care.

I make no pretence to the dignity of a Moralist,

— a part which I freely admit I ought to be the last to try to play. I limit myself, in dealing with the relations of War and Love, to the task of displaying the vicissitudes that in olden days have affected the destinies of the Sword as identified with human personalities. After showing how, under this its first aspect, it exercised a tonic and invigorating influence on women, I go on to demonstrate in what way the latter, owing as they did from Mediæval times downwards their chief physical vigour, their nobility, elegance and charm to the sword, by slow degrees from Century to Century enslaved, corrupted, debased and eventually ruined their benefactor. I denounce « fair ladies » as responsible for the absurdities, vices and extravagances of the youth of camp and Court, on whom they have ever wielded a preponderating influence in virtue of love, pleasure and self-interest. I describe how at the very epoch when they were all powerful, and idolized as divinities, they broke down the heroic spirit and the ideal of chivalry; how grown weary of homage and respect, they little by little degraded love, enforcing on it the modes and rules of *gallantry*, and later still those of libertinism, volun-

tarily accepting the rôle of mere wantons.

Dividing past times, from the barbarian epoch onwards, into four separate periods, I have in each successively noted the progressive decadence of that antique manliness and worth which was of old the special attribute of the Sword.

I have made a point in my denunciations of carefully enumerating the various stratagems employed by women to attain their end, — to win free licence of luxury and gallantry, and impunity for adulterous excesses. I note likewise the different results that followed from their time-honoured methods of cajolement, ruse and perfidy, endeavouring to bring out the importance and extent of the reciprocal and collective action and reaction of women and the Sword as a factor, and a central factor, in the general activity of the age.

Without in any way depreciating or disdaining the refined and delightful good qualities possessed by women, — we all know how bitterly Orpheus, amongst others, had to rue such imprudence, — I merely make bold to suggest this much, that

the dear seductive creatures might, if they had been of one accord and simply in virtue of their irresistible sexual influence over the aggregate of men and soldiers, have guided the said aggregate of their adorers to better issues than they have done. Women in all ages have been the constant motive of assassinations, duels and disasters of all sorts in war!

To account for this fatal influence, passing from synthesis to analysis, I have stated all the facts I have been able to ascertain by conjecture or actual inference. I note from numerous sources and signs the sensual causes of the rapid degeneration which has heretofore emasculated soldiers and men of rank, and point out at each fresh stage of their decadence physical and moral, the gradual, persistent and concurrent shrinkage of the weapon which in past times had been the special badge of their nobility. Finally I lay bare the diverse forms and fashions of affectation, coarseness, wantonness or extravagance that women have from time to time in the course ot their own self-sought degradation and at their own caprice caused love to undergo.

So far as my present subject is concerned, I hardly go further back than the epoch at which the heroic spirit disappeared among the Teutonic peoples ; and I stop at the end of the *ancien régime* and of the period we may call that of libertinism, — the date when throughout all parts of Europe the nobility voluntarily abandoned the practice of wearing swords.

To assure an impartial consideration of the circumstances attending this long-standing process of degeneration of all that is best in both sexes, I have, I repeat, examined evidence of every kind, data of every sort. In treating a question so serious and so complex, it would have been a piece of unpardonable audacity on my part to proceed otherwise ; I base in all cases the ideas I enunciate on an accumulation of convincing proofs.

Admitting as I do this obligation of minute accuracy in the matter of evidence, I felt bound in the interest of my researches to neglect no sources of information, be they what they might. I have been at the utmost pains to gather even the smallest

details bearing on the inner character of the life and manners of bygone days.

The principal documents I have consulted in the first instance are the works of Latin authors, the *Sagas*, and ancient legends. Next, the books of Chivalry, the early Romantic writers, the *fabliaux*, the *novelli* of the old story-tellers, Italian, French and Spanish, and the ancient tales of Germany, gave me their revelations under a fabulous or occasionally an unintentionally veracious form. Then came Memoirs printed within the last two Centuries, note-books of foreign visitors; while finally popular songs, miniatures, tapestries and engravings, as well as certain books and collections of letters published in our own day, have completed my information. The opinions I hold are yet further strengthened, thanks to these confirmatory data ; but in most instances their somewhat broad and *naïf* precision of detail, their indiscreet revelations and the unbridled licence they allow themselves, run the risk in this moral age of scandalizing what may be termed the hypocrisy of latter-day *progress*.

I freely admit that, whereas on first beginning I borrowed from sundry strict Historians their old-fashioned judgements and orthodox views of events, I have later on sought out by preference, from the XIVth. Century onwards, as being more explicit and minute in their sincerity and for that very reason more valuable for the facts under discussion, the free stories or scandalous criticisms of the old writers of anecdotes, satires and gossip (1).

Following this principle, in the same way as a man makes up of diverse stuffs all the various parts of one costume, I have collected together to the best of my ability, to clothe the expression of my own conclusions, the notes which, slowly garnered and laboriously fitted in, I add at the foot of my pages in illustration of the text. My book therefore is in fact no more than a compilation, a collection of separate pieces of evidence, adapted and arranged as far as possible in chronological order.

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(1) In all such instances, while utilizing the author's ideas, I have left his individual phraseology and the original spelling unaltered.

In fine, I own to having in confirmation of my own dicta utilized as much as ever I could the eloquence, knowledge, courage and authority of other men. Many authors before me have done the like, but not all have made open boast of the fact.

Ed. de Beaumont.

FIRST PART

Venus Victrix : Woman as influenced by the Sword

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Venus Victrix : Woman as influenced by the Sword.

CHAPTER I

In Barbarous Ages Woman is a Divinity.—The Warrior, and his « Iron Bride ».

Amid the variety of different subjects suggested by the history of the Sword in Europe, a question of an essentially philosophical character is amongst the first calling for discussion.

This question, connected as it is with the study of love and war from ancient times down to the year 1789, may for the present be subdivided under the following heads :

The influence of the Sword, taken as synonymous with War, Soldier and Gentleman, on the idiosyncrasies, ideas, beauty and habits of women ;

The influence of women on the sentiments, vigour, exploits, fashions and destinies of the Sword ;

And thirdly the collective influence of these two activities, of Mars and Venus respectively, each fully and mutually reciprocal in effect, onwards from the

termination of the heroic age, on the types of civilisation, the physiognomy and general aspect of which, especially on the feminine side, were successively *chivalrous, gallant, cavalier* and *libertine*.

A preliminary analysis of our subject as a whole gives shortly these general results :

The Sword, that is Conquest, War as an all but constant condition, establishing the primary equilibrium of men and of nations, while ennobling the male, invigorates, elates and, by crossing of races, embellishes the female. Subsequently woman, in pursuance of her instinctive tendencies, and in virtue of those very qualities and characteristics of temperament which she owes to the Sword in the abstract, in her turn dominates the latter, enervates and perverts it, while her own degeneration and corruption make concurrent progress.

Thus is produced that twofold action and re-action it is our task to take account of in all its complexities, marking merely by groups of facts and ideas its various consequences as affecting society, consequences ever more and more plainly manifest in proportion as they come nearer to our own times.

The enquiry in question, starting from the strong, rude times of barbarism when the warriors of those days treated women as a Divinity (1), terminates at

(1) « They go so far as to believe that women possess a something divine and a faculty of throwing light on the future. Obediently following their advice, they look upon them as oracles..... »

« Under the Emperor Vespasian we saw a certain Velleda,

the end of the cowardly, petty period of false refinement that saw the Comtesse de Gacé, after a supper-party, handed over naked to the will of lacqueys by a company of dissolute men of rank (1).

In order to discover amid the mists of long past ages the successive causes of so strange a contrast of idolatrous veneration on the one hand and contempt on the other, it is needful from the first to supplement archaic indications, traditional ideas, primitive documents, insufficient as guides, if we would really penetrate back into the arcana of the Centuries, by a careful perusal of the modern authorities, and secondly

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who for a long period of time was held by the majority of persons to be a divinity. Before her, Aurinda and others moreover won the same sort of veneration from the Nations ». — TACITUS. *Germania*, VIII.

« Velleda exercised from her retirement a power equal or superior to that of Kings... The most famous warriors dared enter on no enterprise without her assent, and consecrated to her a share of the booty. » — TACITUS. *Histories*, V and VI.

(1) A practical joke of the same nature was played a little later (in 1721) on Mme de Saint-Sulpice, as related by the avocat BARBIER in his *Journal*. « Some time since, » he says, « the Comte de Charolois (after a supper-party of debauchees) stripped her stark naked (she was dead drunk); they then tied her up in a table-cloth with napkins, like a child, and conveyed her in this condition in a coach to her own door.

Subsequently M. le Duc played her another fine trick. They put two trains of powder with two petards under her seat. Her.... is not burnt, but her belly is, — and a great hole in her thigh to boot. It is said she will hardly recover. La Peyronie, Surgeon to the King, is attending her. »

by such probabilities as reason will admit to be tantamount to certainties. We must loyally accept the notion that « every hypothesis as to the primitive nature of man that is not based on observation of his actual nature is a dream. »

This theorem coincides with the dictum of Macchiavelli to the effect that « such as are born in the same country preserve at almost all periods the same general basis of character » (1). The Commentaries of Cæsar on the Gallic War and the Description of Germany by Tacitus would by themselves suffice to prove the assertion, even were it not nowadays amply justified by a number of other examples, — as for instance the following : « The Romans », translates Ozanam (2), « found in the Spaniards, — a mixed Iberian and Celtic race, — a singular gravity, showing one particularly marked trait, that they never marched out but to fight. Their sobriety was little less conspicuous than their courage : and they fought usually in isolated groups. The women were draped in black veils » — the mantilla Spanish women wear to this day, after two thousand years ».

Many other proofs are to be found of the continuity of national customs. We will give one final example : the Germans « do not readily take the offensive », is a fact noted in his day by the Sieur de Tavannes (3).

(1) Machiavelli. *Discourse on the First Decade of Livy*, Bk. III, ch. XLIII.

(2) A. F. Ozanam. *Les Germains avant le Christianisme*.

(3) Tavannes. *Memoirs*.

« These soldiers, skilful as they were at emptying pockets,

Given this stability of primordial characteristics, which in spite of crossing and intermixture ever revert to their original type, it will not be impossible, taking the recognized sources of information as starting-point and thence proceeding by analogy and a comparison of ideas of every kind borrowed whether from tradition or from such written authorities as are of earliest date and primary importance, to recover up to a certain point the main and essential aspect of the warlike Peoples of ancient Europe.

About the same period at which the mysterious smiths of the North brought to highest perfection their skill in the use of the hammer and anvil in tempering steel, simultaneously the warriors of these Hyperborean lands by their all but exclusive adoption of the sword blade as sole and only weapon, assumed individually a separate and distinct character as *men of the sword*. They are the most complete representatives of the type we have to investigate, coming as they did in a sort of way to be identified with the Sword themselves (1).

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were not of a courage above all reproach. We find Prince Jérôme, who was utterly unable to induce them to advance to the attack, writing thus to the Emperor : « I am of opinion, Sire, that the allies would require some French regiments with them to give them an example » ; and he noted the same day that 80 Bavarians had deserted, *thinking he intended to attack*. — Victor Tissot. *Les Prussiens en Allemagne*. Paris, Dentu, 1875.

(1) In the Epic of the Nibelungenlied, *Sword* is synonym-

Thus identified with his sword, burned on the pyre or buried along with it, his « iron bride » (1), a thing of magic virtue, the warrior gives it talismanic names and strange or terrifying titles; he calls it *Brimir* or *Gramr* (2), that is to say *radiance* or *anguish*. Thence-forward in battle it is the act of individual daring that stands out conspicuous, an exact gauge

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ous with warrior. « The good sword Ortwin spake to the King. »

Of old the warrior and his sword were inseparable. We see in the Laws of the Lombards that it was not lawful to take a man's sword in pledge. — *Leg. Longob.* Bk. I, tit. IX, Leg. XXXIII. — *Capitul.* Bk. IV, tit. II.

(1) « Yes, brave sword, I love thee true, as though we were man and wife, as though thou wert my darling bride, hurrah ! — Oh ! heavenly embrace, » replies the sword, « I wait with longing rapture for my groom. Come to me, my crown is for thee, hurrah ! » — Th. Körner. *Song of the Sword.*

In the laws of the Ripuarian Franks is found a recognized scale fixing the price of the different articles of a warrior's equipment in the time of Charlemagne :

A sword with sheath.....	7 sous
A sword without sheath.....	3 —
A horse (entire), not blind, and sound..	6 —

From which we see that a sword in those days cost more than a good horse. — Davoud-Oghlou. *Histoire de la Législation des anciens Germains.*

(2) In the Scandinavian *Sagas*, Odin's sword is called *Brimir* (i. e. radiance) ; Sigurd's, *Gramr* (anguish) ; Heimdallr's, *Hœfuc* (head). — Other swords are named : *Blodgang* (combat to the first blood) ; *Brinnig* (shining) ; *Freise* (freedom-winning) ; *Gleste* (long and strong) ; *Grotte* (furbished and glittering) ; *Rosebrant* (red-hot iron) ; *Schritt* (quick).

of a man's forcefulness and vigour. On this foundation is built up the spirit and degree of mutual respect of Nations, and later on the hereditary aristocracy of valour. « Freya's sword is but ell-long » (1) — « How short soever your sword be, 'twill never be too short », are primitive sayings of Icelandic proverbial wisdom, a motto as it were for the man of the Sword. Saxo Grammaticus has depicted his primordial and essential character in three words : *He fell, laughed loud and died.*

(1) Thor's hammer is short; the sword of Freya is but elllong. » *Frithiof's Saga*, ch. XV.

CHAPTER II

The Sword the Northern Weapon par Excellence. — Women of Heroic Mould.

While noting the actual influence exercised in old days by War concurrently with the sword, as identified with human personality, over the aggregate of the feminine world of those times, we must recognize the fact that its activity in this direction is shown in its most manifest form among the Scandinavien peoples, whether Anglo-Saxon or Germanic. In those regions during the early epochs of history the Sword, in the literal acceptation of the word, altogether takes precedence of the spear.

Mediaeval documents hardly ever speak of any other weapon, so for as the North of ancient Europe is concerned, as the instrument of heroic prowess except keen-edged swords. « They cleave the bones of men's skulls, » says a song of the heathen Anglo-Saxons. In another: « They have cloven the wall of the bucklers. » — « We have fought out the fight with the sword, » is the refrain recurring at almost every stanza in the Scandinavian poetry of Kraka ; while Tacitus had already in his day mentioned the long swords of the Bretons.

The most ancient *Sagas* are far too modern to explain

the primordial causes of the effects pointed out. Enquiry must needs be pushed back to yet remoter times.

In the cold countries of the North, home of those portentous blades and gigantic two-handed broadswords (1) that were the shame and despair of later and weaker generations, Odin (2), incarnation of the sword, god of the ravens of battle and of victory, the conqueror, the Northern Mars, who had come out of far off Asia with his band of warrior-priests, casts a first gleam of light along the course of legend that serves to reveal a second Divinity, — the goddess of pallid sensualities. Through her, naturally enough, the wealth of generative power of the mighty wielders of the sword acts at first on the attributes and character of women.

The sword, robust and warlike engine, is their fitting mate; it passes on its own vigour to them, and thus, more surely than any magic girdles (3), « hastens the birth of heroes ». It forms the basis of a code of law, the *jus gladii*. At one time we shall find it rousing to the fray those formidable spinsters who in accordance with a custom prevalent among suchlike savage peoples were bound, before being affianced to a husband, to have killed at least one enemy ; at another creating and dominating the instincts of those redoubtable

(1) The two-handed sword was *par excellence* a German, Swiss or Scotch weapon.

(2) Odin, Wodan or Wuotan. — Finne-Magnusen, *Vet. Boreal. Mithol. Lexicon*, under « Odin ».

(3) Ossian's. *Poems*. The girdle of strength and puissance was called *megingjar*.

bride who, like the Norman dames in the time of William the Bastard, could not exist without caresses (1). In those days it was an obligation on the noble and spirited creatures — from whom is descended the *weaker* sex, the sex that to-day affects an extremity of softness and gentleness ! — to be, as for instance at Sparta, before all and above all brave and strong. This is the ideal represented by Ospirine (2), the divine She-Bear, one of the wives of the « Scourge of God », and at a later period by the herculean Brunhild of the Nibelungenlied, and better still by the fierce and fiery Gudrun, the Medea of Scandinavian story, who in the legend of Sigurd stabs her husband and children, — a deed the poet goes into ecstasies over, declaring : « happy the man that shall beget such a daughter, a woman of intrepid and glorious acts. »

To form an idea of this excessive superabundance of vigour and energy, the imagination must reproduce the barbarian life in all the vehemence and violence of its activity, and picture the part played in it by the feminine element developed in these heroic proportions. Vigorous comrades of the sword, trusty companions in all the marches and expeditions of a wandering existence, they shared in the fight and

(1) The wives of the Norman conquerors of England warned the latter by frequent messages that they could not any more remain faithful to their husbands or wait *any longer* for their return.

(2) Ospirine, or in its old German form Ansperine, the divine She-Bear, wife of Attila. — Grimm and Schemelles, *Collection of Latin Poems.*

animated the combatants with their songs and shrill outcries.

Broken to the endurance of cold and fatigue, without fixed home or habits of domesticity, wedded on the march under a waggon-tilt, how could they fail to be inbued with the very spirit and passions of War ? Reared amid the crash and struggle of a life of arms, they exhibited on occasion the frenzy of bacchantes. The women of the Teutones, and those of the Cimbri (1), terrible in their passionate fury, could fight to the death, and then unable to survive defeat, would slay each other with the sword, or even strangle themselves in their long hair, — as they did at Aquæ Sextiae and at Vercellæ.

For these insatiable « mothers of the race », whose descendants, as depicted for us by Holbein and Albert Dürer, affected an intentional protuberance of the abdomen in walking, — precisely the opposite of the Greek Callipygé, the Sword, the wedding-present a Teutonic bride (2) received to inculcate symbolically the duty of courage, was something more than a principle or law, more than a mere weapon ; it was identified with man and his virility. The old *Degen* (sword) signified at one and the same time sword and

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(1) « The women of the Cimbri armed themselves with swords, howling and grinding their teeth with fury and grief ; they would strike Cimbri and Romans alike, » etc. — Plutarch. *Life of Marius.*

(2) *Et scutum cum framea gladioque* (and a buckler with javelin and sword). — Tacitus. *Germania,* XVIII.

warrior, just as in Spain the *Espada* of the bull-fights means the *Matador*.

Judging by these general facts, one may realize the manifold influence which the sword must needs have exercised among barbarians over the aggregate of women in those times of a positive enthusiasm for death, when the Alani (1) and the Quadi venerated Mars under the figure of a naked sword-blade, while yet other Nations of blood used to offer to the deified weapon sacrifices of human gore.

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(1) « The Scythians sacrifice to a sword the hundredth part of all the prisoners they take from their enemies. » — HERODOTUS. The Saxons called Mars *Saxnot*, « the sword-bearer ».

« The bands that descended into Italy under the guidance of Theodebert to sell their services to the Goths and the Greeks, and then betray them turn and turn about, were still accustomed to offer human sacrifices. » — A. F. OZANAM. *La Civilisation au Ve siècle.*

This custom of celebrating the mysteries of religion round a sword still existed in the time of the Emperor Valens among the Alani. — PROCOPIUS. *Vand.* bk. I, ch. III.

« The Alani fix in the ground, with savage ceremonies, a naked sword, which they adore with the utmost veneration as being the god Mars. — AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, bk. XXXI.

CHAPTER III

Frea, the Scandinavian Venus, — and the Domination of the Flesh.

Thus woman, in the Northern half of Europe is found to have grown prolific, intrepid and vigorous under action of War. « They alone in the midst of disasters, these children of the Giants, in other words these daughters of the sword, refuse to weep ». Such is, in brief, the highest expression of their worth under purely martial influence.

On the side of physical perfection, their beauty, if not directly due to these conditions, was the result, — and specially so in Teutonic lands, — of various crossings of blood, an inevitable consequence of invasion and conquest, the vanquished mingling and uniting with the victors.

Thanks to this fusion, which later on will be further perpetuated by the wars and the *droits de seigneurs* of feudal times, fresh types of physiognomy are produced among the different Peoples of Europe, particularly towards the North, development advancing by fusion of their several aptitudes and passions, yet without altering to any marked degree as a whole the fundamental character of each. The resulting French composite type of Germain Pilon and the

pink and white, full-breasted Hispano-Flemish of Rubens are for modern times the *fine flower* of this hap-hazard amalgamation due to the accidents of war alone, — to the action of the Sword under the varying forms it takes on the battle-field or in the boudoir.

As a rule the Hyperboreans, even according to their own ideas, were never it would seem conspicuous either for purity of type or for the union of many extraneous beauties. For to quote certain Scandinavian traditions, « the god Heimdall fared forth, very far to the Southward, to seek out the wife destined to give birth to the noble » (1), — a proceeding not very complimentary to the charms of his fellow-countrywomen.

Be this as it may, there is no doubt the crossing of races, before this had become under the conditions of the systematic marriage arrangements of civilisation a mere consequence of the peaceable relations of international intercourse, came about by means of slave-women or concubines, voluntary or involuntary subjects of the Sword, — which latter, always excepting in Germany, that land of purity and prudishness, was more often than not polygamous. *They* were the first

(1) « The god Heimdall went forth very far to the Southward to seek out the wife destined to give birth to the *noble* ; the noble does not mate beneath him. » — Ozanam. *Les Germains avant le Christianisme*, II.

A work lately published gives us the following : « Though (in Germany) in the upper classes a falsely directed education and the claims of custom paralyze men's natural predilection for beauty, still for all this our people is not *absolutely* devoid of physical charm. — Dr Johannes Scherr. *La Société et les Mœurs allemandes*.

booty of victory, the first consolation after peril, and as ever with the soldier, the pastime of leisure moments in the intervals of fighting.

In this way the courtesans of war helped to repair the ravages of slaughter and depopulation incident to it equally and concurrently with the lawful mothers of families. Each played her own rôle, and each was capable, to judge from certain evidence from epochs not so very far removed in time, of bearing an average of a dozen children (1). Of these the males represented a sort of tribute women were under obligation to pay to their lord and master, the Sword.

This extreme fertility, stimulated as it was by the entirely muscular character of the life of those days, was mythologically under the auspices of Frea or Frigga (2), the Eve, the Venus of Scandinavian peoples, Odin's mistress and goddess of repose and carnal pleasure.

(1) Queen Bertha had six children ; Gerberga, nine ; Bertrada, five ; Eleanor of Guienne, eleven ; Marguerite of Provence, eleven ; Bonne of Luxembourg, nine ; and Isabeau of Bavaria, twelve.

(2) Frea, Freia, Freya, Friga, Frey or Frikka, mistress of Odin, primitive woman, symbol of fecundity. Frea or Freia a synonym of love in the primitive Scandinavian tongue.

Frea is the chief of the goddesses, daughters of Fate and War, who number twelve in all ; they are called Walkyries, Gadur, Rosta and Skulda (the future), the youngest of the twelve Fairies. They go forth every day on horseback to choose the slain. — In Scandinavian mythology Folla is sister of Freia. Freia charmed arms, swords.

The Scandinavians had Freia's day, Freytag, Friday, in the same way as the Latin peoples had Venus' day.

Just as *Frau* (joy) (1) is synonymous with woman, so is Frea synonymous with love. Strange attributes are assigned her by the fancy of trans-Rhenane mythology : she charmed swords, and like her companions the other eleven Walkyries, she visited battlefields and gathered the sighs of the dying. Frea is the Greek or Roman Venus, modified to suit the ideas and temperament of Northern lands with their foggy climate. just as Onuava or Murcia, deifications of the fond and fugitive delights of Gallic life, correspond to the mingled passions inspired and animated by a first infusion of Roman blood.

In virtue of this cult of Frea, in other words the cult of the senses, the natural and healthy influence wielded by the sword over women is modified and supplemented by an exactly opposite influence in noticeable though varying proportions. This constitutes the second part of the subject, to be next considered. It involves the examination of the influence successively exerted, in the North, over men of war by 1. Love songs and their languishing strains, 2. coarse sensuality on the women's part, and lastly luxury borrowed by them from abroad.

At first commencement, as may be supposed. only simple means were employed to secure this domination of the flesh ; but before very long a more complicated fabric of systematic allurement and cajolery was

(1) *Frau* comes from Frouwa ; Frouwa in the Scandinavian theogony is the sister of Fro. the god of pleasure. *Frau* is a synonym at once of *woman* and *deceit*.

built up, in which every detail was directed to the one end, — success, a success the climatic conditions themselves favoured. In ancient Germany, women by the invention and application of ever fresh devices, undertook the task of taming and enfeebling the savage male, chaste originally by national character and now become by mere force of circumstances domestic and home-keeping.

The sentimental spirit, taking its first origin in the religion of Odin, named the inventor of songs, — at first nothing but annals of war and fighting, — is met with again in the very oldest traditions, in the mythical histories of noble families, where Kings' sons are represented as wedding water-sprites (1), and nymphs present warriors with the magic cup of enthusiasm.

The Sword, barbarous as it was in its origin, had yet from very early times its love-songs, destined little by little to supplant the war-songs. The Skalds, soldier-poets who, like the Bards, used to follow the armies a-field rousing with their voice the wild fierceness of the heroes, no doubt extolled and stimulated in times of peace, in their primitive monodies, the merits and stalwart charms of the maids of the North.

The advantages women must have reaped in augmentation of their organized preponderance of influence from these poetic tributes of admiration may readily be imagined. By way of musical laments, presently

(1) « The son of the Swedish King Wilkinus was united with a goddess of the waters. » — Mallet. *Introd. à l'Histoire de Danemark.*

to grow into a sort of monomania, they come by degrees, fostering them by every means in their power, to entangle the sturdy tenderness of their lovers in the meshes of a debilitating sentimentality. In fact it is from the adoption of this minor key in poetry, an innovation of the women, that we must apparently date in the pale regions of fog and cloud the degeneration of the heroic valour of earlier days.

These novel stimulations, seconded by sundry effects of the *ennui* of protracted periods of leisure, were not long in producing among the warriors the morbid state which our remote forefathers called *Skallviengl* (1), « poetic frenzy », a species of musical corybantism, examples of which occur even in our own day in Bavaria among certain moonstruck enthusiasts. The same spirit, which in the Middle Ages found its expression in rhythmical laments, dominated in the Middle Ages the whole of trans-Rhenane and Anglo-Saxon Europe, regions as yet but half Christianized.

Be it observed in passing that insipidity and sentimentality in love are attributes essentially Teutonic, being diametrically opposite to the Southern heat and passion of adoration that Italy and Spain borrow from the fervent East.

Two things, in ancient Wales, could not be taken from a free man: his sword and his harp. — The harp

(1) These inspired persons were to be recognized by their appearance. They were as though intoxicated ; their looks and gestures were designated by a recognized word: *Skallviengl* (poetic madness). » — CHATEAUBRIAND. *English Lit.*, Part I.

was the incongruous attribute of the soldier-singers, the bards, who held contests in music, and at a later period of the *Minnesaenger*, those minstrels of love who staked their livelihood on the vocal duel, chirping in loud emulation like blinded singing-birds.

The women of old Germany along with other daughters of the North had, we repeat, encouraged from their earliest beginning these romantic *minnelieder*, which towards the Seventh Century took the place of the hymns of War and battle. They welcomed them from the very first as another weapon available in their system of gradual enfeeblement of their masculine companious ; and the more they perfect it, the more they master little by little the life of muscular activity, — a life they already dominated so far as purely intellectual ascendency is concerned, too pure and uncarnal in its effects to be quite satisfactory to them.

Tacitus, in a spirit of depreciation of Latin institutions and with the intention of satirizing the vicious habits of his native Rome by making his description of Germany a sort of panegyric of barbarian manners and customs, says speaking of the countless hordes of savage ruffians he then saw for the first time « All they hold dear in the world they carry with them in their campaigns, and from the battle-field they can hear the shouts of their women. In them they possess spectators of the fray whose looks touch them most nearly and whose praises they most desire... If they are hurt in their battles, they seek them out. Then without a sign of fear, the women count their injuries and has-

ten to suck the wounds (1). They carried provisions to the fighting men and exhorted them to acquit themselves like men. « If they were victorious, they distributed among them praise and caresses. In this way, — it is still Tacitus that speaks, — women must never suppose themselves strangers to the sentiment of courage and the hazards of battle. » This last phrase sums up the whole importance of female activity in its earlier stages of influence on men of the Sword.

In those far-off days the simple Teutonic imagination in its dreams assigned to women a certain divine essence, a something prophetic and sacred (2).

Thus travestied in the guise of a well-nigh superhuman being, it was not long before this most astute of creatures had set to work all the charlatanry native to her instincts, all the faculties Nature had endowed her with. Such is the basis, going back to primitive manners and modes of thought, of the subsequent complete preponderance of her power.

From this point on, we are done with mere conjecture; documents are to hand sufficient to reveal in its full extent the dominating influence the craftiest among them win by dint of their chicaneries. We can watch how they build up their power little by little, how they slowly weave their Arachné's web.

Allied at times politically against the Sword with the Pagan priests, who found in this conjunction at

(1) Justus Lipsius maintains they required, no doubt from motives of pride, that those they loved should not come back to them unwounded.

(2) Tacitus. *Germania*. VIII

once pleasure and profit, associated at a later period in the mysterious rites of the soldier-priests of certain orders, they are the subtle and insidious instruments of their will. They give oracles, preside at certain sacrifices from which, it is said, men were strictly excluded, and indulge in the strangest ceremonies. This is what contemporary texts (1) tell us, — previous to the time when they had occasion to expend their occult influence on furthering conversions to Christianity.

Even in the earliest and most primitive times of barbarism, deeply versed in wiles, they pose as mystic agents of Nature's operations; they invent new superstitions; they become witches, prophetesses (2), even fairies. They rule the phases of the Moon, and it is supposed, can bewitch men's hearts (3) and tear them from their bodies; they concoct love-philtres; they know magic words that will blunt steel, — others

(1) Pomponius Mela. C. C. bk. III, ch. VIII; bk. IV, ch. IV, Jornandes. ch. XXIV.

(2) Tacitus. (*Histories*, IV.) says : « From time immemorial the Germans have attributed to the majority of women the power of knowing the future, and such as superstition gives vogue to are looked upon as divinities. »

(3) « Of the opinion held by many that certain women can command the Moon and can drag the heart out of men, — which is *the belief of the idolaters.* » *List of superstitions and Pagan practices prevalent among the Franks*, drawn up at the Council of Leptines in 743 A. D. (*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum ad concilium Liptinense*).

In Scythia there were women whose look by itself bewitched men and caused their death. — Pliny, *Natural Hist.*, Bk. VII. — Solinus, ch. VII. — Aulus Gellius, IX. ch. IV

again to charm swords (1), and to heal wounds. They are seen filling the part of doctors, « asking of the spirits to have their hands full of healing » (2).

By dint of suchlike intrigues and every sort of clandestine manœuvre, all however directed to one and the same end, viz. the complete and final subjection of the Sword, simple and unsuspecting as we see it, little by little women make good their place among the elements of society, and always seconded by a system of organized cajolery that never rests, — « women of every condition have been known on occasion to play the inspired teacher and guide. » - they become the undisputed masters of the heavy sleepers, princes of ignorance, whose beds and counsels they share, and who submit to this female domination, counting the days by the nights (3).

Finally brute force, or to speak more justly, heroic force, caught and imprisoned by the victorious activity of women, in which the love songs soon go from liberty to licence, expires like Attila on a woman's bosom (4).

(1) « A fairy sharpened it... She made the sign of the cross and bewitched it like a fairy as she was ». — Depping, *Wieland the Smith*, ch. V. 45, and Francisque Michel, *Recherches sur la fabrication des anciennes étoffes de soie*, vol. I.

(2) The young Brunhild, learned in the runes, gives Sigurd strength and wisdom. She asks, by way of invocation, to have knowledge and « to have the hands full of healing. » *Song of the Edda*.

(3) « Whereas we count by the days, they count by the nights. » — Tacitus, *Germania*, XI.

(4) « The King of the Huns (Attila) had just added to the

In this way in Northern lands came about the first degradation of the Warrior and Swordsman.

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number of his wives a maiden of an extraordinary beauty. Next morning in the nuptial chamber they found the girl standing beside the unwounded corpse of Attila, weeping beneath her veil. — Jornandes.

CHAPTER IV

Sword and Man alike Gigantic. — Demoralization of the Women of the North by Southern Luxury.

Before carrying further along these lines the investigation of the means formerly employed by women for the purpose of dominating the sword, the fact must be noted incidentally that the logical sense of beauty never had any existence in ancient Germany.

It is even extremely probable that the warriors of the Rhine and of Scandinavia, from the first subjected to the most commonplace system of brutalization in their chaste but prolific embraces, actually welcomed as a sort of *sauce piquante* in these nymphs of the mist certain defective forms, — the natural consequences of the half-savage conditions of life.

« The first object », says Ozanam, « in the domain of the Arts that must have interested a Vandal, was undoubtedly some beautiful statue of a goddess in her complete nakedness » (1). This is certainly a mistake : the Vandals, according to Salvianus (2), being the most modest of all barbarians, and the barbarians, that is to say the Germani, — the latter denomination comprising, in the mouths of the Ancients, all the

(1) Ozanam. *Les Germains avant le christianisme.*
(2) Salvianus. *De Gubern. Dei*, bk. VII.

different peoples of primitive Germany, — not possessing from the point of view of Greek æsthetics the very smallest notion of female beauty.

The same incapacity continued to exist in lands beyond the Rhine in virtue of the persistency of national traits and characteristics. According to a Chronicle of the XVth. Century « the Germans and Swiss after the battle of Grandson, felt nothing but disdain for the courtesans and gay *donzelles*, who had followed to the number of 2,000 in the train of the army of Charles the Bold ».

This way of looking at things, once innate apparently in our Teutonic neighbours, is no less betrayed in the distorted realism formerly professed by the painters of *Deutschland*. An impartial critic, Professor Scherr (1) has lately declared « lack of all instinct of the beautiful and all love of plastic grace has produced (among the Germans, his fellow-countrymen) disastrous effects. »

Under such unfavourable conditions then did feminine luxury, so far as the North is concerned, come into being as one of the results of War.

It was by help of finery imported from Italy and across the Rhine and the Channel that in its third degree of development the influence of women made itself felt on the Sword.

From the moment of the first arrival of the Roman merchants and dealers, after the conquest, the Hyperborean fair ones, are dazzled, as savages would be, by the glittering tinsel of the South. To buy clothing

(1) Dr Johannes Scherr. *Society and Manners in Germany.*

of brilliant and and startling hues, they sell for gold, — which they call *Freya's tears* (1), that is to say tears of Love, — their pale locks. These whether out of mere caprice or as heightening the conspicuousness of their appearance, the Roman women of equivocal character, tired of black, yellow or golden hair, are eager to purchase. Note in this connection how it is especially on the feminine side that the Ancient world shows itself most akin to the Modern. From that time forth, warlike enthusiasm among women is a thing of the past: it is superseded by mere greed, leading as a natural consequence to fierce rapacity after loot. German and Frank women are mad after fine clothes and jewels no less than the Gallic women Strabo tells of, and luxury, a new and entrancing thing for them, endows them with yet another new weapon of power (2). This is where their ascendancy was so dangerous, constraining the Sword to forget the wise precepts of older days that discountenanced wealth as being a motive for discord.

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(1) The tears shed by the goddess of Love while searching for her husband were changed into gold; and the precious metal retained ever after the name of « Freya's tears ». Ozanam. *Les Germains avant le christianisme*, II.

(2) The women of the North, as well as the Gaulish women in the first ages of Christianity, soon rivalled the Roman ladies in the luxury of their apparel. Commercial intercourse with the South brought to the further shores of the Rhine cloth of gold, embroidered girdles, scented slippers, for these coquettes of a new and still half savage country, and provided them with dyes to colour their hair, naturally of a too insipid blondeness, to the fashionable Roman tint.

The moat ancient Scandinavian and Germanic superstitions hold a curse to be attached to treasures, and doomed their possessors to a predestined death. Odin in the earliest times welcomed only warriors who came to him with empty hands, — an example, be it noted, that women have seldom or never emulated.

Rather, from the very earliest period, self-interest and pleasure acting in unison, these give their favours to win the luxuries and refinements of dress, and make it their business to seduce the fair-haired heroes, who from Tacitus' day onwards, loved to remain virgin (1), and to dance naked amid swords, in maturity consenting to marry but one wife. « Germany is chaste », is the burden of an old refrain. Meanwhile the viragos, (specimens of whom quite of the ancient type, though a good deal toned down in the course of centuries, may still be met with at servants' hiring-fairs in country places), display their arms and bosoms bare (2). Quaffing beer out of a human skull (3), they essay by

(1) « With them it is held a disgrace to go with women before the age of twenty, and they highly esteem such men as are long without having a beard, because they suppose that in this way they possess more strength and vigour. And indeed this cannot be concealed, inasmuch as they bathe publicly with the women in the rivers, and are clothed only in skins which leave a great part of the body bare. » — Caesar, *Commentaries*, bk. IV, ch. II.

(2) « They wear no sleeves, and display besides their arms a portion of their bosom. »

(3) On a feast day Rosamonda, wife of Alboin, king of the Lombards, in the VIth. Century, drank from the skull of

way of blandishments absurd affectations utterly incongruous with their massive proportions, taking the initiative in aggressions on the senses. It is easy to guess, taking into consideration the old-time prudery of the German men, what pains German women must have been at to so far seduce them and bring them by their allurements to become what they are.

There are sundry old German Masters, dating from the Sixteenth Century onwards, who exhibit the *Lansquenets* and other fighting men of their country in full career down the tide of obscenity.

Thus was set up among the barbarians that civilisation of feminine ruse and cunning which has produced a progressive hereditary enfeeblement of virile force, eventually bringing down to the average inches of to-day the very lofty stature of the Hyperborean warriors.

Of course it must be understood that in virtue of their time-honoured purity of morals this degenerative process was longer retarded, and by consequence more strikingly evident, when it did come, than anywhere else in Europe. In the South, climate and primitive character with its tendency to passion have from the first been incompatible with so vigorous a development; and accordingly in those countries the diminution of human stature is much less obvious.

This is why the North must needs be the chief field of observation in connection with the Sword, which is

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her father-in-law. — Paul Diaconus, *Hist. Long.* See also Herodotus IV. — Strabo. IV. — Diodorus. V.

there best represented in its early aspect. This fact once recognized, we may proceed with the further investigation in due course.

On examining into the causes influencing the diminution of size and strength of mankind that took place in Europe towards the end of the Middle Ages, an epoch when the Knights of Suabia were still of gigantic stature, these are found to consist primarilly in the influence exerted by women, — women's love, ideals and habits of life. They represent, according to the old legendary tales, the seductive perils pointed at in the allurements of the Sirens, in the fatal blandishments of the Nixies of fairy lore, in the Slavonic *Roussalkis*, fair maidens who devoured their lovers.

« I give thee a rede..... Soon as thou seest women dazzling in beauty seated on their stool, suffer not the silver ornaments in their hair to trouble thy sleep, and seek not thou after their kisses ». This is one of the most weighty pieces of advice Sigurd in the *Edda* receives from a Walkyrie whom he has set free, and who wishes by her wise counsel to repay the debt of gratitude she owes him.

In the same *Edda*, the oldest monument of Teutonic literature, maid and matron both are said to be creatures made up of fickleness and duplicity.

Before particularizing the successive periods of diminution in virile strength, a diminution that implies concurrently a reduction in the size and weight of the sword, it will be well, in a parenthesis, to establish by way of a fixed starting-point irrefragable proofs as to what was the *summum* of bodily

measurement among the Northern warriors in general.

An approximately full and complete account might be given of the muscular development of fighting mankind solely on the authority of metallic witnesses, that is to say acording to the varying weights of the most ancient weapons, and above all others of the sword (1).

Talis ensis qualis homo, — like man, like sword. It was pre-eminently by the weight of his weapon the swordsman grew stalwart.

The tangible proofs of our present-day degeneration combine with the most ancient texts to give an idea of what the Northern swordsman was at his origin and during the Middle Ages.

Quite a mass of tradition and of documents exists mentioning men of seven feet high, of whom likewise Caesar and Sidonius Apollinarius (2) speak. In face of

(1) According to the special forms of the swords adopted among such or such a people of Europe since barbarous times may be gauged not only the national character of the different nations, but also the various degrees of muscular development which of old distinguished them one from another.

These indications are strongly accentuated in the contrast invariably presented between a sword of Scandinavian, Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon make and an elegant Greek or Italian blade.

(2) Caesar, IV. I. — Sidonius Apollinarius, bk. VIII. ch. 9, Pliny, bk. II, ch. 78.

Certain Danish burial-places were known under the name of « Giants' Chambers ». Some writers of Antiquity agree in saying that in their day instances existed of men of nine Roman feet. This would seem to be the maximun of human stature.

Nowadays the greatest stature in Germany does not

such evidence, without going so far as to believe in Giants, we must allow that in Marius' time the Barbarians were of quite exceptional stature.

« The reports given of the stature and strength of the giants of the North, — the constant heroes of her legends, — terrified the Roman soldiers, and even the veterans ». Such is the sober statement of the most trustworthy historians of the time. Their descriptions are familiar enough of these enormous barbarians who figured in the Roman triumphs or fought with one another in the Circus.

« The Germans, » according to Strabo, « were of loftier stature and fairer complexion than the Gauls or the Romans; the tallest of the latter seemed small beside them » (2). So much being granted, it remains to take account of the causes of the gradual degeneration of the German swordsman, and this is best done by investigating the attitude taken up by women and their relations towards him.

A very ancient Norwegian author, the Monk Theodore (3), fortifying himself by a passage from Pliny the Elder, pronounces the dictum that the stature of mankind diminishes naturally in the course of ages.

This idea of gradual decrease is one of very ancient

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exceed, — and this is quite exceptional, — 6 feet 6 ins. (2 m. 04.) This, the maximum for our age, is represented at Berlin by M. von Plueskow, lately quoted in the newspapers as a giant and a curiosity.

(2) Strabo, IV. — Florus, II. — Appian. *Celtic.*

(3) *Commentarii historici duo...* by B. C. Kirchmann. Amsterdam 1684., I, 35.

antecedents, as we see; but merely going back half way in the past, we find more than sufficient proofs to justify it. These proofs become especially noticeable after the first primitive savagery has been subjected on the sensual side to some sort of discipline, when round the fighter's hearth all the arts and allurements of the mistress of the house were now combined to enervate him during his times of leisure.

CHAPTER V

Gradual Degradation of the Feminine Ideal. — Beer and Women ruin the Teutonic Warrior.

Tacitus has described the Germans as living in time of peace in a sort of stolid indolence ; and from his day onwards far too much has been made by simple-minded people of the domestic virtues of their descendants. « No one but a simpleton can any longer compliment us on our perfect and true-hearted German artlessness », says Dr. Johann Scherr in a recent Work (1).

Throughout that muddy, melancholy land the predilection for family life, the boasted « love of hearth and home », is nothing else whatever but a mere necessity of climate. This pretended virtue is due to the sole and simple reason that, if it rains, it is generally better to stay at home than to go out of doors. « Quintessence of beer and stove », is the expression of Cardinal du Perron, characterizing in 1611 the general features of « that land it is impossible to love, for any man but a native born and bred. » (2)

(1) Dr. Johannes Scherr. *Society and Manners in Germany*.

(2) « A country which it is impossible to love, unless it is one's native land. » — Tacitus, *Germ.*, II.

There it was in primitive times that round a rude brazier in the long winters gathered a circle of drowsy warriors (1) ; then in later times, simultaneously with the adoption as a heraldic device of the two-headed eagle, grotesque caricature of the victorious Roman emblem, women and beer exercised in the privacy of the interior their two-fold influence over these idolaters of « sentiment ».

Such were the conditions of life amid which the mere swordsman, sitting absorbed in besotted dreams betwixt his huge, fat, carnal doxy and a row of beer-pots, waited for the highest offer of the recruiting officer and the most tempting chance of booty.

« It is quite enough », says Tacitus, « merely to encourage the passion for intoxication among the Germans to vanquish them by dissipation more easily than by arms. »

All Commanders of troops are aware how quickly the wine-shop and the brothel will spoil the soldier. Easy then to conjecture that this life of drinking and idle dissipation was from the first a main cause of the degeneration of the Sword in Germany, and the degradation of the fighting man, who grows ever more and more greedy and mercenary, that he may

(1) « Oh, King ! » he said, « it is even as in winter time, when you are seated at the feast with your great men and your thanes, and a great fire kindled in the midmost warms the whole hall, while without all is wrapped in whirling snow... » — From the speech of Coïfi, high-priest of the false gods, to Edwy, King of the Northumbrians. — Ozanam. *Les Germains avant le Christianisme*, II.

get wherewith to satisfy feminine exactions in the way of ornaments and jewelry.

Notwithstanding the favourable opinion our fathers entertained of these indoor morals, it is open to grave doubt whether the women of the North, eager as they were to rule in the house by playing upon men's sensual appetites, really remained any more chaste and self-restrained in their home life than was their great goddess of Love, Freya, in the Olympus of Odin and the Northern gods.

The cult of War, the true religion of pagan Scandinavia, which survived to the XIth. Century, had from the Vth. downwards descended to a state of the utmost corruption and the lowest ideals; while long before that epoch even, « the goddess Freya played prostitute to all the heavenly heroes and even to mere mortals ». Such the celestial patronage under which domestic life was established and perfected in this purest of all possible worlds, as it has been characterized.

The conclusion to be drawn from the whole series of observations thus far brought forward is, that during the epoch of barbarism, the heroic ages of the Northern peoples, the Sword conditioned certain distinct and definite virtues among women, whereas on the contrary during civilized periods, these latter have shown a constant tendency to act in such a way as to diminish the strength and dominion of the Sword.

The latter effect, so conspicuous on the further bank of the Rhine, showed itself in a no less marked degree, but in far more ancient times, south of the Pyrenees and of the Alps, — in these regions con-

trasting strikingly by the exquisite forms it took with the heavy, dull sensuality of Teutonic lands.

The better to realize this contrast, we should pass at one step from North to South, from the Germany of the Rhine and from Scandinavia, where the wanton, fair-haired Freya dresses her blonde locks with curdled milk, to Iberia, whose lascivious dances are mentioned by Juvenal and Martial (1); then to Italy, where amid the seductions of intoxicating melody and fragrant perfumes, the brown-locked maids of the South reign as priestesses of love, myrtle-crowned and amorous.

For the North, we have just seen in what ways women undertook and carried through the enfeeblement of the Sword.

For the South, we have now to note by what methods they reduced it to a like state of weakness and decay.

By a close examination of the conditions of Ancient society, some idea may be formed of the authority women exerted in it by virtue of their charms and merits under different aspects. Going back to the remote times of the *Iliad*, their amorous activity in War, so far as the civilisation of Southern Europe is concerned, is represented by Helen of Troy and Briséis.

(1) « Young wantons of Cadiz (*Gaditanae*) will ply their loins in lascivious movements, prolonged and artfully seductive. » — Martial. *Sat.*

Ad terram tremulo descendant clune puellæ. — Juvenal. *Sat.* « They cower to the ground, shaking their quivering hips », — the old Ionian dance.

We find women in those far-off times, to judge by the accounts of demi-gods and Greek heroes, content to set the warriors in action without showing any high degree of emotion themselves. In this way the *nonchalant* fair ones of those days set the world on fire, themselves the while curiously consulting the oracles of shredded rose leaves. Later again, it was ever with the same external appearance of inactivity that wantons with painted or veiled face exercised from age to age their fatal influence over the Sword, whether among Greeks or Mussulmans (1). It is need-

(1) « The bride, being of the blood of Othman, has a right to exact all possible marks of respect from her husband. They may not see each other openly and freely till after marriage. The details of the first night of wedded life are regulated by a strict code of etiquette. In accordance with its laws, a slave woman must pass the night in the bridal chamber. The difficult position in which the young man finds himself may be imagined. His wife is wrapped in veils; after having lavished on her the formal salutations and exaggerated compliments due to every relative of the Khalif, he humbly begs her to remove the veils that he may admire without let or hindrance her radiant beauty.

Everything depends on this first interview. If the bridegroom is a man of wit and resource, the fair descendant of Othman is transformed into a mere woman of mortal flesh and blood; the slave is turned out of the room, and the future is assured. Existence will then be endurable for this consort of a Sultana... Etiquette is exceedingly strict. It ordains the husband must remain day and night in the part of the house reserved for the men, the *selamlik*, at the disposition of his wife. There he must remain in perpetuity. He only enters the harem on the summons of his wife. He

ful thoroughly to grasp the notion that in Turkey the women, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, have always been just as powerful as everywhere else. Islam under its chivalrous European form, represented at our very doors by the Moors of Spain, who took delight in the intoxication of voluptuous reverie and invented a language of flowers to express their tenderness in, was invariably, and more and more as time went on, ruled and influenced by women. The domination of women was a constant factor with all the Ancient peoples of the South, whose *gladius* (sword), made feminine in *spatha* and *espada*, offers so sharp a contrast with its fine slenderness and small handle to the massive blades and enormously elongated hilts of Northern weapons.

Everywhere alike then, differences apart due to varying conditions and periods, the same holds good whether for the Germany of Tacitus or the Italy of the Cæsars.

Be it noted that among such peoples as were true

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may not smoke in her presence, nor be absent without her special authorisation. » — F. M. in the *Temps* newspaper.

There is no doubt about the subordinate position held by the secular husbands of these sacred brides. They may not enter the marriage bed except dragging themselves along on their knees. They must leave it on their bended knees, and backwards !

« The education of the Mussulman nobility being entrusted to the women, (the present Sultan, Abdul-Hamid, remained in the Harem till he was sixteen), this training contributes not a little to the *decirilisation* of the higher classes. »

devotees of love, Venus, soul of the Universe (1), Our Lady, patroness of chivalry and on occasion pretext for the duel (2), had far more worshippers than any god of Paganism, or even the Christ himself. In Antiquity as in the Middle Ages, the true religion of soldiers was not so much Venus, — « not so much the Virgin, as *woman* ».

A certain respect inherent in tender ideals having from the first formed an essential part in the old swordsman's character, we must note carefully the epoch at which this sentiment touched its zenith, before proceeding to define the successive periods of its decline, — all this bearing directly on our main argument.

Tenderness towards women, and its corollary respect, a feeling which warriors of old times instinctively associated with it, existed long anterior to the Christian era as well in the Roman code of morals as among barbarian peoples, worshippers of the Mother of the gods.

The Roman Senate, re-establishing one of the four laws of Romulus (3), had decreed that women should, as a mark of public homage, take precedence of men, of the Sword, — an equivalent almost for the modern

(1) Venus, who possessed so many titles significative of her different qualities, was the first Divinity Theseus king of Athens made his people worship.

(2) Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen. *Gesammtabenteuer*, « A Century of Old German Tales. »

(3) Laws which were engraved on a bronze Tablet in the Capitol.

Lugar a las damas ! — the « Ladies first » of Spanishpoliteness.

The same principle formed an integral part of the new religious Faith. « The Church », says St. Ambrose, « has it even more nearly at heart to make women respected than to save men from death ».

The Visigoths, the Burgundians, the Franks, all professed the profoundest respect for woman as woman; and facts exist to show that the feeling was very general. In Gaul, women possessed for a brief space of time as in Italy, a senate and tribunal deliberating and deciding on the fate of armies. According to the Roman legal code, the man who offended modesty before a patrician dame was liable to be condemned to death, and the *Lex Julia*, no less than the Burgundian laws and those of the Salic Franks, punished with equal severity any insult offered to a free-born woman, or even to a concubine.

The Salic law, by which the maternal line had first right in matters of inheritance (1) punished with a fine of 7,500 deniers, an amount however soon reduced (2),

(1) Women were summoned first to receive inheritances.— J. F. A. Peyre. *Loi des Franks*, Article under heading LXII.— Davoud-Oghlou. *History of Law among the ancient Germans*. Berlin, 1845.

(2) In our own day in France, the man who insults in the coarsest manner a woman, be she who she may, is liable at law to a fine of from one to 16 francs. This is removed by a long step from the 7,500 deniers fixed as penalty by the Salic Law! Under Charlemagne the denier was the twelfth part of the silver sou, equivalent to 36 francs of our present money.

any one who should have applied the word *harlot* to a free-born maiden, while the ancient code of Salzburg actually assigned the death penalty as the forfeit for rape.

In brief, woman as woman, whether honest or no, was in all parts of Europe cherished and respected by the Sword, and protected by its laws. She was the object of a symbolic worship that passed down directly and in unbroken succession from Pagan idolatry to Christian adoration. Venus, fallen from her high estate, leaves to the Madonna, Saint Mary of the Snows, her world-famous Temple on Mount Eryx (1).

Here then we see the man of the Sword at the maximum of his vigour and efficiency, at the point when Lucan admired « his soul that mastered death » Simultaneously we find women in their triumph over brute force at the zenith of their virtues and dominion. This the highest, culminating point, we must not lose sight of, when later on we come to trace the gradual decrease of virile force and the successive stages of decay in woman's prestige, — in other words the decay of the feminine ideal.

A few centuries have always sufficed these fair creatures, deified as goddesses by the sons of Mars, to compromise and destroy their own repute. Little by little they have always descended voluntarily from their high position, while concurrently the warrior

(1) The temple of Venus on Mt. Eryx, once served by a college of courtesan-priestesses, became the Church of Saint Mary of the Snows. — Saint-Augustine, 47, *Publicola*.

has been spoiled by their emasculating influence.

Once they found themselves fortified and embellished, decked out and ennobled, by the Sword, from that moment did they set to work to achieve its absolute subjection. Then later still, by virtue of their clandestine modes of influence and that love of novelty that has ever been at once their stimulus and their ruin, they dragged it down and down through successive stages of degradation, — from the high ideal of chivalry to mere commonplace gallantry, from gallantry to the debaucheries of the most refined sensuality. Such then is the fatal influence of women, an influence represented in fable and legend by Omphalé, by Circé, by the Fairy Morgana.

CHAPTER VI

« The Monstrous Regiment of Women" — Female Wiles too much for the simple Swordsman.

As it behoves us to anticipate objections, it will be expedient by way of justifying the views just formulated, to present once more definitively and under its primary aspect the natural cause underlying all feminine influence on the origin and destinies of the Sword.

Voltaire affirmed « Society depends on women ». They it is who made us what we were, and in fact what we are. Natural law decrees that before birth we shall absorb, seeing that the foetus lives on the mother's actual bodily substance, a preponderating proportion of the maternal being, which transmits her instincts to us. Crossing of breed only makes the boys take after their mother; the Valois are true Medicis. — she-wolf and dog produce a wolf. Thus the ever acting factor of heredity would seem bound, as effect following cause, to gradually modify for the worse the future virility of the human race.

Thus it is the woman, her merits and her defects both being inevitably transmitted from generation to generation, who must be held primarily responsible. We are hers from the very first, from the very source of our being, even before the effects of lactation and of the

first spoken words we hear are experienced. A Roman writer attributed the first commencement of the decay of eloquence at Rome to the evil influence of the nurses.

Our earliest education, influencing as it does according to Leibnitz, Descartes, Locke and Helvetius, our whole existence, being confided exclusively to women, themselves the pupils of yet other women, has by means of the ineffaceable impressions of childhood the strongest effects on our whole social character and bent, and thereby on the future destiny of our lives. She it is who impresses on us our first notions of life, she who later on possesses all our youthful being with present love or the pleasures of anticipated joys. Thus as mother, then later as sister, mistress, fiancée, bride, or daughter, does woman, a creature of much superior adroitness and far more perseverance than man, come eventually, no matter in what way he may represent it in words, to govern him in fact. To reach her ends, over and above this maternal education, — which as a mere child she has practised on her doll, — she possesses in her caresses, always selfish and often false, in the constant little duties she fulfils in connection with the *modus vivendi*, in making life's daily round run smooth, every means of acquiring influence, every refinement of ruse and broken promise, every subtilty of allurement, and in her tears every resource of tender perfidy. With this aim she dissimulates the knowledge she has by instinct of the vices and weaknesses of her so-called lord and master, whom she despises in her heart all the while she slily professes herself his slave.

« No man hath it in his power, » Marguerite of Navarre has said in the *Heptameron*, « to over-rule the deceitfulness of a woman. » No means of defence are really ours against her and her cajoleries ; and yet in every relation uniting her to us, her dishonour involves ours, and her successful wiles expose us to the ridicule of our fellows. This unfair responsibility, still further complicated in former days by questions of pride and mutual jealousy, was at the bottom of all the chief troubles and quarrels of the old fighting, duelling world, that chose to spend its best blood in their adjustment. So fatally has the all-powerful army of women ever exploited for their own ends the personal valour of the man of the Sword.

Old traditions affirm that among the Barbarians the male child, the *Degenkind* (child of the sword), used to receive its first nourishment after weaning on the point of a sword (1). According to other legends the women of Ireland used to pray God their sons might die on the battle-field, while Hungarian mothers were in the habit of biting their boys in the face from their earliest infancy, wishing by this means to make them more terrifying to the foe. What a contrast these ideas and customs of primitive peoples offer to those of modern times, when mothers are only too strongly tempted to mutilate their male offspring, to render them unfit for military service, — to *spoil* them for the conscription ! The same object is attained by their bringing into the world sickly, ill-grown creat-

(1) Solinus, ch. XXV.

ures, — a result of their ridiculous tight-lacing.

The degradation and enfeeblement of European virility by women's agency may be verified from the Middle Ages downwards, and especially so by looking to the various fashions the Swordsman adopted from time to time. His personal vanity is displayed in a disgusting coquetry of costume, — in the shameless (androgynic) forms adopted in his dress or in his accoutrement. Confined at the waist, immoderately expanded at the shoulders, ornamented with enormous artificial organs (cod-pieces), he represents, dressed out in this shameless costume, a sort of two-fold homage paid to the female sex by all that was obscene and effeminate in the male.

For were not all these grotesque absurdities provoked by the one wish « to please the ladies » (1)?

(1) « Of a truth no temper is there, I ween, so stern and sour but must needs be tickled with some delight to see what I remember me to have beheld no such long time agone (about 1560) at a tennis match. Two young men, of a gay, self-satisfied air and free carriage, met together therein most strangely accoutred in the extremity of the mode,.— whether of set purpose to amuse the folk or no, I cannot tell. However, be this as it may, the one wore a doublet exceeding tight-fitting and as it were glued to the body, a very close cut in fact, as one might say, short in the body and tight in the sleeves, made expressly as it were for wrestling in. The other player, a huge great fellow of ample figure, had his slashed more prodigally than even the Swiss use, cut in points, trimmed, filled out, lined, moulded and rounded, stuffed out like a mule's pack-saddle, thick enough well nigh to turn a musket-ball and coming down to within easy speaking distance of his knees; the

Mutually bound together by an instinctive *esprit de corps* and sense of common interests, — a feeling however in no way inconsistent with mutual spite and jealousy between individuals, — women have at all times exerted an irresistible influence over our habits and fashions, by the mere fact of their being the originators of new modes in love. Thus *they* were really responsible for the provocative indec-

sleeves to boot, over and above their usual wide spread, being lengthened out and dangling at the elbow, like a filter-bag for hypocras. The one had an Albanian, or steeple,— hat, a good ell in height, and with but barely two inches of brim ; the other a vast sombrero all flattened out like a soup-plate, with more than sesquipedalian flaps. The one had long trews, sailor's pants, Provençal trousers, breeches, flapping to his very heels ; the other nought but a little round pad or porter's knot by way of breeches, gathered in and cut short ; and his hose long and thin like a German flute, fitting close on the thighs, for all the world like an ostrich's leg or a Lombardy cock's. The one carried an ample, long, wide cloak cut mighty full, sweeping the ground all about ; the other a little, dainty, perky, smart tucked-up mantle, that just dallied with his girdle. To make an end of our list, while the first showed a mere strip or border of shirt at the neck rather than a proper turned-over collar, no bigger nor no smaller than the thickness of a rush, but for all that loop-holed at the edge thereof ; the second looked as he might have put his head through the middle of a millstone, all puckered in flutings and pipings, five and twenty or thirty of them all a-row, minute and close together, curled up in crisp rolls, just like the angels' heads or symbolical heads of the winds one sees represented peeping through a great tumbled mass of clouds ». — Blaise de Vigenère. *Annotations sur Tite-Live*.

ency of costumes invented and worn to please them.

This responsibility, one that no woman can disavow, results above all from the fact that women, holding as they do the monopoly of taste and elegance, and well understanding the art of looking us men over and appraising us with a glance, — that jesuitical glance that is the reverse side of their pleasing modesty, — might easily by the mere irony of a smile have made us reform every one of our bad habits.

By their own words they betray the wide range of this influence when they pronounce against a man that phrase of scorn and disapproval, « A badly brought-up fellow ! » Does not the very expression imply an unconscious avowal of the importance of that early education women give us?

This bad education it is produces the coxcomb, the lady-killer, a creature women pass on from one to another with a readiness that should surely be highly humiliating to their favourite. Such a man they call, apparently in derision, a « seducer ». In this title is to be found our sole excuse, as it is to please them, and in the simple belief that such is the way to *seduce* them, that the love-sick gallants of the sword, from the effeminate Roman exquisite to the foppish weakling of the Regency, dress out in transparent robes, crown their heads with rose-garlands, shave their eye-brows, « flour or paint their phiz », bedizen themselves with peacock's feathers, — wear those pointed shoes the mediaeval church excommunicated (1),

(1) « The Bishops excommunicated pointed shoes, putting

hose of two dissimilar hues, a padded paunch, earrings, patches, powder, artificially exaggerated hips and false calves. The vestal virgins, « chaste to the waist down », to follow the expression of a Father of the Church (1), protected effeminacy in the person of the youthful Julius Caesar, descendant of the goddess Venus (2).

The pity of it, thus to see men led away by women to make themselves ridiculous, when the latter might so easily call forth our valour instead, making it the price of their love and their caresses ! On their good pleasure may yet depend the fate of battles, for many instances show how on occasion they have in history wielded a remarkable faculty of stirring enthusiasm. All the world knows what prodigies of valour one poor maid in armour made Frenchmen do.

« There exist qualities which only show themselves in a people when woman makes it her task to develop them », wrote Mme Necker de Saussure.

Admitting this, will it not be merely fair to allow further that women, representing as they do statistically at least half of the human race, must needs have played, simply as a result of their numerical impor-

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them in the category of « sins against nature ». In England, an Act of Parliament forbade the wearing of long points to shoes.

The inventor of these pointed shoes was the English knight, Robert le Cornu. — William of Malmesbury.

(1) Saint Ambrose, *De Virginitate*, bk. I.

(2) The Vestals interceded in favour of Caesar, compromised for wearing, as a young exquisite, a tunic insufficiently fastened.

tance, a very large part in the aggregate of social activity? Yet this is precisely what History is most careful *not* to admit; while that ever-present factor in human motive, masculine vanity, consistently and persistently ignores the actual range of this irresistible force, one that of set purpose keeps in the background in order to act the more surely.

The Poets alone, from the earliest dawn of the Epic, show us woman disposing, by virtue of love, of the lives and wills of heroes, and turning to her own advantage the enthusiasm of hordes of warriors.

The *Iliad*, the *Edda*, the *Nibelungenlied*, and the Romances of Chivalry, all establish the fact that the power of love over men's hearts made women the soul of warlike movements. Scandinavian mythology declares how « among the Ases all men lived in peace (in the golden age), till a woman came thither to bring discord and be the cause of the first of all Wars ».

Greek and Roman no less recognized in their fabulous legends the same principle of discord and disorder, the parent of so many disasters. « The love of women, » the Poets affirm, « did the Greeks more hurt than ever the arms of the Trojans. » Similarly it was Venus who stirred the greatest troubles in Olympus.

CHAPTER VII

Preponderance of Female Influence, and Demoralization of the Sword.

There are two distinct categories of women destined in every age to have a decisive bearing upon the doings and exploits of the Sword, and which in a general way must be held responsible for the different phases it undergoes. These are, for the earliest civilized societies of Europe, the Patrician dames, matrons or *noble ladies*, in other words the prolific mothers of the race, owing allegiance to Lucina, and on the other hand the *hetæræ*, *sphinxes* (1), unfertile ladies of pleasure, devotees of greed and the wanton Venus, — this last class including, though not identical with, the *demi-monde* of Greece and Rome.

These two great castes, mutual rivals and foes of one another, were always brought into intimate contact, at every point along the march of History, with war and concurrently with the arts, by virtue of the striving of mankind after love and beauty, in a word the effort to win pleasure. This effort made men raise a golden

(1) « The hetæræ were called *sphinxes* on account of their unscrupulous rapacity. The sphinx was the emblem of harlots, haunting with their solicitations cross-roads and public squares. »

statue to Phryné, in the days when the Greeks moulded their cups and sacred bowls on the pattern of the bosoms of beautiful courtesans, long before the Theatre was definitely consecrated to Venus (1).

In this enquiry, it is needless to remark that, in face of the imposing aggregate of noble and distinguished women concerned, the « common clay » of the sex does not come into question at all, peasant-women, house mothers and the like, « females of low estate », and least of all those degraded beings of the proletariat, mothers that merely reproduce in their offspring the mean features and general ugliness of the parents, at once the natural enemies and the victims of the police. Everybody knows what is the favourite part of these last in civil disorders, as assassins of the soldiery.

It is then only women really deserving the name who are answerable for the good or bad qualities and the various characteristics impressed of old on the morality of the Sword by the irresistible stress of their influence. It must be remembered how this influence, which played so vast a part in the evolution and

(1) « The Theatre was the realm of Venus. When Pompey replaced by stepped seats of marble the wooden platforms on trestles where the old Romans had sat, he dedicated his building to the goddess, whose puissant attraction stirred all Nature. »

Three thousand dancing girls, like so many priestesses, served the theatres of Rome; these they kept in the city in time of scarcity, when the Grammarians had to leave the borders.

history of the Ancient world, was almost invariably on the side of evil the exceptions to this quasi-law being of extreme rarity.

The most astounding exploits of knights in the days of chivalry and of swaggering swordsmen and bullies in later times undertaken in honour of fair ladies and mistresses, exploits as a rule marked by an extravagant, not to say ridiculous, character, were all inspired and dictated by the ambitions or merely the unsuccessful combinations and unfulfilled designs of coquettes. As late as the XVIth. Century, men often fought simply to win these latter titles, wealth, or at the least some satisfaction to their pride.

After the restrictions imposed on sexual indulgence by the laws of Chivalry in virtue of its constitution had fallen into disuetude, women of this character proceeded of their own choice to reward with ample favours any deed of arms that had advantaged them ever so little. By the adoption of such a system they once again perverted courage to unworthy ends. Heroic in its origin, then chivalrous, presently more and more gross and material, it soon degenerated into the mere swaggering bravery of gallantry pure and simple. Subsequently we shall see in detail in what way these successive changes came about.

Francis I. of France used to say, fair ladies had as much to do with rendering gentlemen valiant as had their sword; but we must make no mistake as to the precise bearing of these flattering words. In these new deeds of reckless daring, stimulated by foretaste of the pleasure promised as their reward, there

remained nothing whatever of that sentiment of enthusiasm, nothing of that lofty ideal, which had in preceding ages animated the fray. In their heroic period the Barbarian warriors exposed themselves to death in the « battle-play » in a single-minded dread of dying of sickness (1), and later again the Paladins confrontred the most desperate perils merely to win a smile from some hard-hearted châtelaine.

Much as we admire women, their beauty, their wit, all the tender spells they use and abuse, we are obliged to recognize the fact that through them was brought about in old days at once the physical degeneration of the swordsman and the moral declension in the character and spirit of his exploits. Yet in spite of this there have never been wanting panegyrists of the fair sex ready to emphasize and extol such doughty deeds as *were* inspired by women's glamour.

In order to review as a whole the manly virtues which ladies have hitherto only mimicked occasionally and in détail, it will be enough to turn over the pages of that rather insipid work of Pierre Paul de Ribera entitled : *Les triomphes immortels et entreprises héroïques de huit cent quarante-cinq femmes.* « The immortal Triumphs and heroic Enterprises of Eight Hundred and Forty Five Women ». Such was,

(1) Entry into Valhalla was refused to warriors who had died of disease. — Saxo Grammaticus. — Mallet *Introduction to the History of Denmark*, ch. XIX.

Such warlike enthusiasm did not exist in the North alone ; in Greek χάρμα means synonymously at once *joy* and *battle*.

according to the precise enumeration of this author, the total of brave women who have illustrated their sex throughout the whole range of past history since the earliest recorded times. The number, we see, is not overwhelmingly large. The fact is, of what it is the custom nowadays to call heroism and self-devotion in women of quiet lives and peaceful dispositions scarcely a single example, of undoubted sincerity, is offered by earlier ages in connection with the sword, down to the days when the Sister of Charity, tenderest incarnation of Hope, first took up her post at the bedside of wounded soldiers.

Our tribute of homage hereby rendered to this the one solitary and trifling exception to be found (our investigations stop short of existing social actualities), it remains to examine the conduct and morality of the charming and high-placed dames who infatuated the Europe of our fathers. All were as thoroughly overlaid with a traditional suavity and politeness as was the frail Agnes Sorel (1), that « purveyor of naughti-

(1) A judicious chronicler, Georges Chastellain, who lived in close relations with the Court of France in the time of Agnes Sorel, far from suffering himself to be seduced by the ascendancy of her beauty and the praises of flatterers, was struck only by the disrepute into which the King had fallen and the secret grief and chagrin that consumed the Queen. He enumerates compassionately all the mortal wounds the heart of the unhappy lady had to endure, when she was obliged « for peace and quietness sake » to see her rival move and have her dwelling day by day along with her, have her special lodging in the King's house, have company and rout of women more numerous than her own, see all the

ness », that « false prude, » as she is described by one of her contemporaries well acquainted with the facts.

To pave the way to the latter portion of the subject in question, and before pronouncing on the rôle played of old by famous women in relation to the Sword, it will be well to undertake an unprejudiced analysis of the nature of their influence, whether collective or individual, over military exploits generally attributed by Historians to causes entirely unconnected with them.

My intention in the ensuing inquiry being to proceed solely and entirely on the basis of established facts, I shall invariably refer all objectors to the authenticated documents I have consulted. By dint of a careful examination in their pages of character and conduct, beginning with the holy prophetesses of prim-

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concourse of lords and nobles set towards her, have fairer bed furniture, better tapestry, better linen and clothing, better rings and jewels, better kitchen and better everything. Yea! all this she had to suffer, and harder still, to take it cheerfully ».

The same writer, a little further on, describes the luxury *Agnes Sorel* affected in her toilette, and inveighs against the improper fashions she set to *modest women*. « She wore plaits a third longer than any princess of the Kingdom, higher head-gear, more numerous and more costly dresses. And of everything that could make for naughtiness and looseness of living in the way of dress, of all such she was ever the purveyor and ensample, for that she displayed her shoulders and bosom in front down to the middle of the breast ». Quicherat. *Histoire du Costume*.

itive peoples, and going on to ruling princesses, concubines and mistresses of Kings, titled courtesans, veritable queens and princesses of love, representing the fullest scope of women acting with every advantage of position and in the free exercise of her instincts and activities, we shall come to realize the importance and extent of the pernicious effect produced through their appeal to the senses by these fair despots on the worth and well-being of the Sword.

Gaspard de Saulx-Tavannes, a courtier and a soldier, says in his Memoirs (1) written somewhere about 1560 : « The domination of women always advances handsome, well-dressed gallants and carpet-knights : 'tis the origin of naughtiness, of ballets, masques, lubricity, ingratitude, cruelty, revenge, discord and unfair dealing ; advancing to fortune men and women of shameless lives to the prejudice of stout captains, learned lawyers and men of worth.» Such were the unscrupulous ways of these fascinating creatures, these light-headed, false-hearted beings, who in their sovereign recklessness make their own caprice the sole criterion of good and evil, and exalt love above virtue, They have invariably, — the fact can be amply proved, — turned to evil ends the heroism of lovers, the tender gallantry of warriors, of Knights Crusaders and of gentlemen, and the diplomacy of the delegates of the Sword. Instances exist to show how in all periods the balance of right and justice has been biassed ; while petty frivolities are allowed to become the causes

(1) Gaspard de Saulx-Tavannes. *Mémoires.*

of duels or of war. The Italian War, Brantôme declares, was decided on by Francis I. of France for no other reason except that he might at Milan see and enjoy the charms of the fascinating Signora Clerice (1). There is no doubt that the beauty of the courtesans of Lombardy disastrously prolonged the French occupation of that country, and was partly responsible for its failure. Finally, as a last example of the same dangerous influence, Buckingham cajoled by the coquetries and favours of Anne of Austria, armed England against France in 1527.

« Women have more control over Princes than any other folk », was the dictum of Étienne Pasquier. In almost every case it has been women who, to satisfy some fancy or caprice, have made the swordsman a rebel, a law-breaker, a bad subject to his King, or a swindler at play. How many bold acts of brigandage, how many foul murders done and quarrels provoked, long before and for many a year after the Bourbon difficulty, *Jarnac*'s challenge and foul stroke, and the party disorders of those days! How many plots hatched, and betrayed, by the jealousy or the engaging wickedness of fair dames !

« To fix the guilt, look for the woman », said a certain sagacious magistrate. « Political parties come to

(1) Admiral de Bonnivet had spoken to King Francis I, of the « *Segnora* Clerice », and « had made the King long to see her and sleep with her : and so this was the principal reason for that expedition — a reason few suspect. For indeed, one half of the world does not know how the other half lives, etc. » Brantôme *Grands Capitaines* (Admiral de Bonnivet).

ruin by her, » Michelet declares; and she is the life and soul of revolutions. « We are always a bit mixed up in them, » said the Duchess de Grammont in 1789 to Cazotte; « but it's a recognized thing we're not to be taken seriously to task for it ». The same influence is invariably to be found acting in critical times, and above all in the lively inception and carrying through of social changes.

Before *the League*, writes Varillas (1), « it was then the fashion for a man to testify his devotion to ladies by divulging to them the most sacred of Court secrets. » And just look at the disorders and disasters of those times! Somewhat later, during *the Fronde*, women roused to action the youth of the Sword by a prodigal liberality of their favours, and caused in France, Mazarin himself is our authority, « more confusion than ever was in Babel. »

On scrutinizing the inner penetralia of History in regard to the heroines of former days, invariably one finds them, whether it be Mme de Longueville, or the Princess des Ursins, or Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, almost without exception in regular connivance in their intrigues with the *Gilded Youth* of the Sword, the nobility of action. Such *bonnes fortunes* rendered them arrogant and reckless; while their fair companions led them to take a pride in being as unscrupulous as themselves in the choice of means.

A weapon of weight at the Court of Princes, the sword, it was said, « was an inborn prerogative of

(1) Varillas. *Hist. de Henri III.*

nobility » (1). They owed everything to it; and every excess was forgiven it, crime and betrayal in love, assault and assassination. Women, always indulgent critics of the vices themselves inspire, — for can they not turn them to their own profit? — always touched by a crime committed to pleasure them, paid liberally with their persons for such trifling services as this. About the year 1554 the sword saved the Parisian ladies from the hateful introduction of the invidious chastity-belts of Bergamo, an imitation of the ancient Roman padlocked guards (2).

(1) « On the 23rd. December, the Duc de Guise, who was seated at the council-board, having been summoned thither at the King's behest, and having risen up and set forth to travel thereto alone and unarmed save for his sword, the *innate* prerogative of his rank... » Petition presented to the Most Honourable Members of the Court of Parliament of Paris by the Most Noble the Duchess de Guise, etc. Imprinted at Paris by Bolin-Thierry, Rue des Anglais, by the Place Maubert, 1589.

(2) The chastity belt, or safety belt, of the Italians and Spaniards, is intended. « Bergamo is a town of Italy where they sell and make use of many of these belts. » — Le Duchat, *Notes sur Rabelais.*

« Unless I plug my wife, as do the Bergamasques. » — Rabelais, Pantagruel, bk. III, ch. XXXVI.

« This precaution, which sundry Italians have deemed good to take with their wives, was some thought of introducing into France in the Sixteenth Century. » Brantôme relates the fact in his *Dames Galantes.*

« In the days of King Henri », he says, " there was a certain jeweller who imported at the fair of St. Germain a dozen of certain contrivances to bridle women's affairs. These were constructed of iron, and encircled the waist

All this, and we wish to lay special stress on the point, reveal to us two principal actuating motives, viz, pleasure and self-interest. It is our task in the ensuing Second Part to verify by an analysis of certain facts at once the importance and the invariable concomitance of these two powerful incentives.

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like a girdle or belt; they passed underneath, and could be secured there with a lock, — being so cunningly framed that the woman, once bridled therewith, could never avail for the pleasures of love, as the things were pierced but by a few minute holes... »

« Many gentlemen of the Court could not endure to see the commerce the Italian merchant had of these padlocked guards; and threatening to throw him in the river if he continued the said traffic, they constrained the man to give up the trade. Since that day no one has dreamed in France of having these guards made, or of having them brought out of Italy. »

Nevertheless, in spite of Brantôme's statement of opinion a « brayer de fer » (iron truss) or *chastity-belt* is mentioned in the *Historiettes*, no. 473., related by Tallemant des Réaux.

See also *Playdoyer contre l'introduction des cadenas ou ceintures de chasteté* (Plea as against the Introduction of « Guards » or Chastity-belts), by Freydier. Montpellier, 1750. 8vo., with a plate representing the contrivance in question.

(A *chastity-belt* is to be seen in excellent preservation among the treasures of the Musée Cluny in Paris; and no less than three of them were exhibited in London in 1892 in the very curious and valuable Collection of Instruments of Torture made by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, which also contained the famous « Iron Maiden » of Nüremberg. All three *cadenas* were delicately made of thin hoop iron, padded where necessary, and still covered with the remains of figured silk or satin. (Translator.)

SECOND PART

Pleasure and Self-Interest: The Sword as exposed to the Disintegrating influence of Women.

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Pleasure and Self-Interest : The Sword as exposed to the Disintegrating influence of Women.

CHAPTER I

The All-conquering Sword. — Every Woman loves a Soldier.

According to the philosopher Helvetius, « examine as well the acts as the opinions of mankind, appeal in succession to individuals, to any small association of individuals, to a nation, to an epoch, to humanity as a whole, from all sides comes one and the same unanimous answer, that *good* is what contributes to our pleasures, *evil* what militates against our interests (1). This principle, if admitted at all, must be allowed to hold good in an especial way for the generality of women, who to follow the expression of Simonides, « begin as Sirens, and end as pirates ». It is then on pleasure and on self-interest that in matters of gallant-

(1) Victor Cousin. *Philosophie Sensualiste.*

ry is based the chief prestige of men of the Sword and of the nobility of the rapier. Nothing admits of more certain proof.

A glance at the aggregate of general characteristics of the sex will suffice to show as one of its most obvious traits a species of perverted sensibility, recalling the odd taste most of them display for the biting acidity of unripe fruits. This craving for exaggerated, even violent and painful, sensation, ever pushing these victims of ungoverned caprice into extremes, — sorcery, martyrdom, the paroxysms of the St. Médard convulsionaries, the visionary ecstasies of the Cloister, made them, as was to be expected, insistent claimants to the Sword for something excessive, something inordinate, — a whole class of sensual gratifications, distinct of its kind but undistinguished by any special name.

By its bold fights of gladiators, which in the Ancient world were adjudged by the Vestals and the courtesans, by its single combats in the lists, where often the life of unfaithful wives was the stake, by its triumphs and gay pageants, its tourneys in honour of fair ladies, its glitter and its martial music, — Queen Elizabeth was accustomed to dine to the sound of fifes and trumpets, — the Sword, more even than the tocsin of revolt, more than the incense fumes, the chants and organ-thunder of Cathedrals (all provocatives, some terrible, some ecstatic, of tremulous accesses of sensibility), acted on the nerves and nervous susceptibilities of these devotees of exaggerated emotion, always ready to throw themselves into the arms of the victor, even

though a foe. The fierce clash of steel on steel made them quiver to the marrow of their being, when the combatants' very soul passed into the gleaming blades, sometimes imagined to be enchanted.

Without following exact chronological order in instancing the chief attractions for women exercised of old by the different effective qualities of the Sword, it is quite possible by the help of a few examples to indicate and analyse in a summary way their general range and importance as affecting the manners of old Europe.

At the very first glance it is found that, dating from the best days of chivalry onwards, with all that was most distinguished among dashing, dainty dames, « great ladies a man sees at arquebus range », as the old Spaniards put it, the Sword had undisputed command of all advantages. Always fond and festive, always at lovemaking in times of leisure, always showing a gallant affectation of reckless gaiety and ease of manner, it represented in the eyes of women yet other telling and seductive qualities besides. It was an indispensable ally in their indulgences, giving a certain flavour of « high life » to their caprices, a surfeit of caresses after battles fought and victories won, presents from over seas and fresh news of the great outside world. It guaranteed the most sensual and irresponsible impunity in fast living, precedence over a hated rival, romance in adultery or intrigue, nay! even in detection and scandal, assassination effectually killing ridicule, — a thing always more shameful from the feminine point of view than dishonour. It could

give them nobility (1), in other words the right to be proud and prettily dressed, could make them rich after a campaign and famous after a tournament, — for « a lover slain for their sake brought them great repute ». Then again, a principle outweighing all the rest put together, the Sword, that thwarted and annihilated all sumptuary laws, was the most convincing preacher and advocate of luxurious living and pleasure. Humble servant of ladies' wishes, it afforded them instant protection against offences of every kind, the laws being far too slow in operation to please their childish caprice, always fain to reverse the hour-glass before the hour is run.

It was the special duty and privilege of the Sword to be the agent of women's politics, of their everlasting love of intrigue and not seldom of their personal vengeance, offering them the chance, better than did sorcery or witchcraft, of freedom in a sudden and premature widowhood that was always among its possibilities. St. Jerome relates how in the early days of the legalisation of divorce a certain matron had seventeen husbands in less than a year (2). Last but not least,

(1) « Women had not the right to be entitled *ladies* (*dames*) until their husbands had been made knights. Before that they were called merely *damoiselles*. » — La Curne de Sainte-Palaye, *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*.

(2) Saint Jerome. *Epist. XCI, ad Ageruchiam, de Monogamia*. « In less than thirty days, " Martial (V. 1. 7.) tells us, « Thelesilla is already at her tenth husband. So many marriages are nothing but legalized adulteries. „

In Tacitus' day, the Roman ladies were for ever changing their husbands.

the Sword could silence « forked tongues, indiscreet envious and ill-conditioned mouths, » no less than timid or easy-natured husbands, who made no scruple of taking advantage of its forbidden fruits. — On ocasion in the life of the senses acts of cowardice may have their heroic side.

Thus, thanks to the Sword, « small wonder then if the Lady Polygamy doth prance and kick, doth play the wanton and corrupt all with her adulterous excesses! » Relying on the impunity his protection gave her, the mistress of a ruffler, a *Gladiator*, — by this name was still known as late as 1640 the duellist, the stickler for the point of honour, — would show off, « nosegay at ear » (1), sundry little airs of studied arrogance, sundry little ways and tricks of toilette, alluring or triumphant, specially affected by the favourites of the rapier. « To walk abroad protected by her *shadow* (2), and for that account to be feared and respected by all women and all men, » — did not this constitute a supreme form of gratification for a woman's vanity?

So in the world of dress and flirtation, where this

(1) « Le bouquet sur l'oreille », a phrase alluding to the old French country custom of attaching a nosegay to beasts for sale. So people say in jest. « Cette fille a le bouquet sur l'oreille », Such and such a girl is on the market, is on the look out. (Translator).

(2) « The Spanish women love to walk proudly, protected by the shadow of some Captain, whom they keep with money they earn from rich lovers. »

Y ser a su sombre respetada y tormida de tos y de todos, i. e. « to be by one's shadow respected and feared of all women and all men ». — Quevedo. *Obras escogidas* (Select Works).

particular infatuation raged like an epidemic, the great question was which should have as *cavaliere servante* the keenest blade, *delle più forbite* (one of the most highly polished), that is to say the most brilliant champion, though perhaps not always the most lavish in presents, one « having all the look of a desperado that knew well how to chastise fools to teach them to speak discreetly of ladies » (1).

Cobarruvias in his Dictionary has described and defined a gallant of the sort. « The *espadassin* », he says, is a champion who walks abroad with a swagger, his hand on the pommel of his sword, keeping its point tilted in the air ».

Does not this peep at a *Spanish ruffler* in the act help us to guess at all the successes and favours with the ladies such a bearing and attitude must needs have won ?

To these various causes of success with women might easily be added a number of others. Ever since Classical times, when the Sword as a career was ranked by Xenophon above any other profession, when a simple courtesan was foundress of the Floralia or Floral Games (2), or offered to rebuild at her own charges

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(1) Brantôme. Opuscule XVI, p. 492.

(2) The Floral Games, founded by the courtesan Flora, were restored again by the fair Isaurian.

This account of the foundation of the Floralia rests solely on the authority of Lactantius (*Institut.* 1.20.). The indecency that accompanied their celebration is probably the only ground for the story. As a matter of fact the Floralia were apparently instituted at Rome in 238 B. C., on the occasion

towns destroyed in War, the devotees of him of the Golden Sword, — « every woman, high or low, loves to receive presents », — have lived on victorious soldiers, — except of course, but this is of comparatively rare occurence, when pleasure carried the day against self-interest, and the parts were reversed, the gallant living at the charges of his *inamorata*. In France this reversed order of tbings is found embodied in an old custom. By virtue of a certain feudal privilege, damsels of gay and independent habits, in other words « of irrepressible conduct and merry life », were in some cases farmed and taxed by the Sword; while in Italy courtesans paid as highly as they could afford their champions or *bravi*, — the name given to the swordsmen whose office it was to defend and keep them in countenance » (1). Here peeps out the same instinct which in barbarous ages made the woman admired whom War had constrained to work, while peace lasted, for the warrior.

Among all the high qualities and privileges of the

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of the dedication of a temple to the goddess Flora by the Aediles, L. and M. Publicius, in the Circus Maximus at the command of an oracle in the Sibylline books, for the purpose of obtaining the divine protection for the yearly blossom (ut omnia bene deflorescerent). — Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* XVIII. 286 Similar, but informal, festivals first in the country and afterwards introduced into towns, had long been common in all parts of Italy in the Spring. (Translator.)

(1) Brantôme. *Grands Capitaines* : (Henri II).

« Like the courtesans of Italy and Rome, who will always have a *bravo*, for thus they call him, to defend and keep them in countenance. » — Brantôme. *Dames Galantes*.

Sword, there existed one pre-eminently bound, as may be imagined, above all others to raise its prestige in the minds of women. This was the power which, according to the habits of the period, the champions of love, necessarily exposing their friends as they did by the very fact of their exploits to envy and misconstruction, had the disposal of, that of publicly consecrating the beauty of such or such a fickle fair one by proclaiming her handsomer than her rivals.

The defiance addressed to Monsieur de Villars by the Earl of Essex, lover of Queen Elizabeth (1), — Queens' favourites are invariably men of the sword, — concluded with these words, calling to mind the old-world phrases of French chivalry which still to some extent survived at the Court of England: « I am a better man than you, and my Mistress is fairer than yours ». Surrey, being at Florence, had a challenge or *cartel* of the same sort placarded on the walls there, addressed to « all Christians, Jews, Moors, Turks and Cannibals », in which he, Surrey, as against all and sundry, maintained the incomparable beauty of Geraldine. — Petrarch sighed for Laura, but he did not offer to fight for her.

Nor were these flattering manifestos on the part of the gallants displayed solely in favour of ladies « of high degree, » or well-born *demoiselles*. The *fair ladies of mirth and merriment*, the *hirondelles de clocher* (steeple swallows), as they are entitled by a

(1) L'Estoile. *Journal du règne de Henri IV*, vol. I, p. 144 notes. The edition of 1741, printed at the Hague.

law of 1521, likewise found bold blades to proclaim the superiority of their charms. This was particularly the case in Italy, where the women, like those of Spain, were always partial to rufflers, knifers with their scarred faces, and even brigands.

In the work of Fausto da Longiano (1) are to be

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(1) « No ruffler or *bravo* was reputed valorous and a man of honour, that had not ill-reputed and immodest women in the places of evil reputation, kept there for public traffic, thus acquiring the title of *palese ruffiano* (accredited ruffian, or bully) ».

These *ruffiani* had adopted the custom of challenging by *cartels* or public defiances, some of these being drawn up in the name of the whole *scola* (college) of the *bravos* of Bologna or of Naples. As an instance of the terms employed in such defiances, here is one, — « cartel of a *bravo* of Milan to one of Rome ».

« You may have heard tell how I have always made profession of having fair harlots (*putte*), and how many of such I have at the instant in ward (*balia*). I have been informed lately there is come to you such a one by name Perina, exceeding handsome. So, unless you will of your free will send the same to me, or transmit me word that I may send to take her to go along with mine, hold yourself in readiness to make good your refusal, etc. ».

The following is the answer of the Roman to the Milanese :

« You are not the sort of fellow that a man of my sort need take account of your profession. Perina belongs to me, and is perfectly handsome. You shall bring as against her two of your women, of a surety less handsome and less worthy, who shall be at my disposal if I win the day, to be Perina's servants in all ways that shall seem good to her. And indeed, even were she less handsome, less amiable and

found the terms of sundry cartels such as the wandering *bravi* used to nail up on the doors of their favourites to vaunt their charms. At the chamber-door of the *cantoneras*, the light o' loves, of Old Castile, each client used to hang up in sign of protection to his chosen fair one his rapier and dagger before going in (1). Not difficult to guess the many advantages which the *noble courtesans*, — for under this title were known the most superior of the ladies of pleasure at Rome in the century during which the fair Imperia (2) flourished, — reaped from their associa-

less gentle, none the less would I maintain her to surpass yours in beauty and amiability and up-bringing ».

These *bravi* errant sometimes issued a *general cartel* to the following effect for all the towns where they arrived with their *putte* (wh... res) :

« *Cartel* of a *bravo* errant as regarding his *female companions :*

« Whatsoever man of honour there be that shall dare affirm that the *women* (*femine*, light women) whom I bring hither in my company are not the handsomest, most amiable and most gentle of all such as dwell in this city, I hereby offer to fight with him in public or in private lists with no matter which of the weapons our like make use of ». — Fausto da Longiano. *Duello del tempo cavalieri errante, de bravi, et de leta nostra...*

(1) On going in to *ladies of pleasure*, it was customary in Spain (about 1660) to « leave at the door of their chamber sword and dagger, and so any that came there afterward, seeing these weapons hung up there, withdrew without further word ». — Arsens de Sommerdyck. *Journey in Spain*, 1665.

(2) One of the first to be known under the name of *noble courtesans* was the fair Imperia, on whose tomb in the Church

tions with the Sword, a never-failing source of tenderness and lavish generosity. Pleasure and self-interest were thus in all these cases the social motives actuating the alliance between women and the rapier, a sort of treaty of free exchange, in fact, and mutual benefit. For ladies have in all ages, from the times of the Roman matrons, whose peace of mind was disturbed by the gains and triumphs of the courtesans of the flowered robes (1), taken toll of victorious soldiers in the form of presents, and won fine clothes out of their lovers' martial generosity (2).

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of Sant Gregorio on the Celian was engraved the following epitaph :

Imperia, cortisana romana, quae, digna tanto nomine, rarae inter homines formae specimen dedit; vixit annos XXVI, dies XII; obiit 1511, die 15 Augusti. (Imperia, a Roman courtesan, who, well worthy to bear so high a name, gave an example amongst men of most rare beauty; she lived XXVI years and XII days; and died in the year 1511, on August 15).

In her day, a medal was struck in her honour. Bandello and Negri spoke of her in their writings as a *noble courtesan of Rome.* « Imperia, a noble courtesan at Rome, as you are aware », wrote Negri, in 1532, to Marc-Antony Micheli.

(1) *Courtesans of the flowered robes,* that is to say wearing, in accordance with a decree of the Areopagus, flowered robes, variegated and embroidered in different hues, intended to distinguish them from the matrons and virgins, clad in public in more simple attire. — Suidas, *Lexicon.*

(2) « To deck her fairly withal before God and all men », a knight offered his lady a complete outfit. — Olivier de la Marche. *Le Parement et triomphe des dames* (The Bedizening and Triumph of Fair Ladies), of the XVth. Century.

In the romance of *Berte aux grands pieds* (XIII th. Cent.),

At all times and in all seasons then, wherever this alliance of the Sword and the Distaff is found, the same motives are discernible, and the same general spirit governing human actions. « Of habits and qualities, it is ever to such as are useful to themselves that women give the title of *right* and *honest.* »

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we see how such as brought them presents were welcomed by wives or mistresses.

CHAPTER II

Women's Infatuation for the Sword, — Ferrum est quod amant.

Before proceeding to the last part of our treatise, that portion which is to take up the third and final aspect of the subject, it is necessary to point out, and this with some particularity of detail, other chief causes of the persistent association of women with the Sword.

The conjunction and mutual understanding of the two, attributed above to the joint influence of pleasure and self-interest, already discernible in barbarous ages, are completely manifested only in the manners of civilized Centuries.

From Perseus to the Marquis de Létorrières (1),

(1) « Louis XV. died, and Létorrières, well known as having attended the King in his sickness, made haste to go and fight with the champion of Savoy, who gave him two wounds in a single lunge in the right side. M. de Létorrière was put to bed and his wounds treated ; his door was kept shut, and the news given out that he had caught the King's disease. His wounds were most severe ; but this did not prevent him after two more days of treatment, from being off to scale the walls of the Abbey of Montmartre, and once inside to spend the night by the side of Mlle de Soissons, under the great vaulted arcade that leads from the cloisters to the Cemetery... It appears the Princess prudently

very few fighting legends exist in which is not to be found figuring, now mixed up with magic and marvels, now with the dramas of history, some woman, the instrument of doom by her love or her greed.

In the martial politics of the Olympus of Greece and Rome, in the warlike mythology of the Scandinavians, in the traditions of pagan Iceland, in the Christian mythus, where a captive lady represents Religion delivered by the Sword, in the Romances of the Middle Ages, in the emblems and devices of chivalry, *devices of arms and of love* (1) everywhere, as well in fact as in fiction, are to be found conjoined, — like the arrows and the yoke of Ferdinand and Isabella, like the crescent of Diane de Poitiers and the initial H. of Henri II., — these two ideas, these two words, Sword and Sex, love and war, symbolized by Freya in the arms of Odin, the slave of the magic necklace (2) and

returned home before day-break, and the unhappy girl never saw her gallant lover again. The latter's wounds had re-opened; his blood escaped to the last drop during the night, as no doubt he preferred not to call for any help. Next morning he was found stretched stone dead on the flags of the Cloister. The dreadful business was hushed up... The body was superb; M. de Létorrières was carried back to his bed, and was announced to have died of the smallpox. » — *Souvenirs de la marquise de Créquy.*

(1) *Dialogue des devises d'armes et d'amour*, etc. Paul Jovius. 1561, *Les droitz nouveaulx, avec le débat des dames et des armes.* Paris 1493. 4to. *Blason des armes et des dames.* Galiot du Pré, Paris 1532.

(2) « Freya did what she pleased with Odin by dint of the necklace (*brisingamen*) which the dwarfs forged for

by Venus wantoning with Mars, even in the guise of planets (1).

Look into old Chronicles, listen to the gossip of ancient Tales and *Nouvelles*, you will find how the Sword, everywhere and always, took art and part in quarrel for some cherished and adored fair one. « The duel was in its origin based on love » (2). Even the favourites, the *mignons* of the emasculate Valois fight and kill one another, « and that for ladies' sake, » Brantôme declares (3). It is for them men contend in fencing-schools (4), and slay each other in battle, and

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her. — This magic necklace reminds us of the girdle of Venus, the charm of which mastered the gods. « It was wrought with the needle and coloured in variegated hues; it had in it all pleasures, love, longing, amorous converse and gentle words. » Juno borrowed it of Venus, to make herself loved.

(1) « There is no planet loved of Mars but Venus only, — as the Astrologers do hold. » — Scipion Dupley. Paris, 1602, ch. VIII, p. 45.

In the Mineralogical science of the XVIIth. Century, the *Vitriolum Veneris* represents Venus; under this form, she takes such strong hold of Mars, that is iron, when she is in contact with it, « that at the last she doth substitute her own proper body and maketh that of Mars to disappear. »

(2) « We have seen, and still see every day, so many examples to prove that fights for love occur no less frequently than for honour. » — Scipion Dupleix. *Les lois militaires touchant le duel.* Paris, 1602; ch. VIII. p. 45., Of Duels originating in Love.

(3) « I will begin my relation with Quielus and Antraguet, noted fighters, and that for ladies. » — Brantôme. *Discours sur les duels.*

(4) In the fencing-schools of Italy, there were held. about

in brawls and on the field of honour. Wherever men fought, it was for their honour and to defend their honour. The swordsman carried « the honour, — forfeit or no, it made no matter, — of his lady on his sword's point, so that no man durst assail it » (1). Then he goes on, — it is still Brantôme speaking, — naïvely betraying the ideas of his time on such subjects, to add bluntly. « Is it then after all so great a crime for a woman in return for such services to give some little courteous favour of her body ? » (2) Not a few indeed of the « gentle and honourable ladies » of the time were fain to grant such recompense. The Sword, master of every art of allurement, offered a standing excuse for women's caprice, while men's daring intrepidity, astonishing and charming them by its contempt of danger, induced on the women's side a tendency to lightly regard the importance of the merely physical.

It fell out once, an old Italian legend relates, that a virtuous lady of great beauty, by name Desdemona, « grew love-sick for a Moor » (3), — who, so the trad-

1560, matches in honour of ladies. — Giacomo di Grassi, *Ragione di adoprar sicuramente l'arme si da offesa come da difesa, etc.* (Manner of employing Arms with Surety, whether of Offence or Defence), Venice 1570. Introduction.

(1) Brantôme, *Dames galantes*.

(2) Brantôme, *Discours sur les duels*, edition by Buchon.

(3) Gio Battista Giraldi Cintio, *De gli Ecatommiti*, viith. Nouvelle of the IIIrd. Decade, in the French translation of Gabriel Chapuys. The use Shakespeare has made of the story in « Othello » is too familiar to need more than mention.

ition says, was a man of a most admirable courage. Three hundred years later, about 1780, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges the finest swordsman of his day, enjoyed the favours of all the greatest ladies of Versailles, though he was of the same complexion as Othello. « The brave have no need of beauty. »

Such was the universal opinion during the warlike ages, — that gallant ladies admire and prefer dauntless men. Queen Isabella of Castile was wont to say she knew no sight in all the world so fine as a fighting man in the field, unless it were a beautiful woman in her bed.

The Classical texts reveal the fact that feminine infatuation for the Sword had at the date of the Caesars reached the height of its paroxysm. « His eyes were blood-shot, his countenance coarse and ignoble, but then he was a Gladiator! That name makes them as beautiful as Hyacinthus... *Ferrum est quod amant*! — 'Tis the sword they love. » exclaims Juvenal (1), indignant at seeing wives of Senators, patrician ladies, in love like the Empress Faustina (2) with common

(1) « He was ignoble, *but* he was a Gladiator; by virtue of this name Hippia sets him before her children, her country, her sisters and her hustand...' Tis the sword they love! » — Juvenal, Sat. VI.

(2) Being at Gaëta, Faustina, who had married Marc Antony, gave herself up body and soul to the gladiators; she composed, to celebrate the death of one of their number, according to what Polyphilus says, a certain lengthy epitaph.

« Others again are infatuated with a Gladiator. » Petronius *Satyr.*

Among the female gladiators who fought all stripped in

fencers, and fighting all stripped in the Roman circuses. It is indeed the *ferrum* (iron), the sword, that seduces them; for once mistresses of it, the noble weapon *par excellence*, which from Arria's time marks the highest tragic note they are capable of, they grow emboldened and claim men's rights. They add to the passive courage they have always displayed as mothers or as martyrs, an odd, freakish spirit of reckless daring, and henceforward feel equal to all and every audacity, — though there always remains discernible a touch of the temper of the hero who died of fright at the notion of the end of the World's coming.

The Sword gave them the right to kill or at any rate to fight, and just as the martial exploits of a small number of men ennobles an entire Nation, so the heroism, or perhaps merely the bold front, of certain women, made for the general profit of the sex as a whole. By their stirring doings with the sword women succeeded in winning from the ancient world of men sundry concessions, the importance of which cannot be exaggerated.

The laws of the Ripuarian Franks (1) recognized,

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the Circus were wives of Senators and ladies of the highest rank. — Tacitus, Annals, XV.

« At that period was held a combat of women. Although they fought bravely, having been chosen with this end among noble ladies at a special meeting,... » — Dio Cassius, Hist. Rom. bk. XXXVI.

Victoria, mother of Victorinus and imperial ruler of Gaul, married for love Marius, a sword-maker.

(1) According to the laws of the Franks, in certain cases

under certain conditions of separation, the wife as possessing a right to make choice between a distaff and a sword. If she repented her complaint, she chose the distaff, emblem of servitude and submission, and must say to her husband, « My gentle lord, your humble servant! » (1), a traditional formula in use throughout the Middle Ages. On the contrary if, formally and before the judges, she seized the sword, she became free again at law, on the condition of killing her husband, — the very issue which in a later Century and without sanction of law, Francesca Bentivoglio (2)

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of separation claimed by a woman dissatisfied with her husband, the former was presented with a distaff (*conucula*) and a sword. If she chose the sword, she became free again, but on the condition of killing the husband, who represented servitude for her.

The distaff was, from Ancient times onwards, the symbol of submission on the part of the wife.

In the tomb of Jeanne de Bourgogne, wife of Philippe de Valois, who died in 1348, were found, at the time when the royal coffins at St. Denis were opened in 1793, a silver ring and the remains of a distaff. — G. d'Heilly, *Relation authentique d'un religieux de Saint-Denis.* (Authentic Narrative of a Religious of St-Denis).

Schwert oder Spindel, « sword or spindle. »

A very ancient proverb has it : « when the distaff commands and the sword obeys, the house is like to fall. »

(1) « My lord, behold me your humble servant. » Thus spoke she who held by the distaff, having accepted the *sou* and *denier*. — *Formules de Marculphe*, bk. II, ch. XXVII.

(2) « Francesca Bentivoglio, seeing her husband make a successful stand against the four assassins she had concealed under the bed to kill him, herself sprang from her bed and seized a sword, with which she struck him down. » — Valery. *Voyages en Italie*, vol. II, bk. VII, ch. I.

and Mlle. de Châteauneuf (1) brought things to!

From the first day women adopted the sword in their never-ending War of Independence against the male, dates their claim to social equality, and their rallying cry, so delightful in its frank effrontery, of « down with the distaff! » The Comtesse de Flandre and the Comtesse de Champagne dispute between them the honour of bearing in state the Royal sword at the coronation of Louis IX. Many a time since then has the weaker sex in its inimitably light-headed way shown a pretty effrontery of fence, assuming under the very nose of the stronger sex the defiant airs of revolted serfs who have won their freedom at last.

Such are some of the reasons why the sight of a sword must needs have always called up in the mind of women the most pleasing thoughts, quite justifying Juvenal's phrase, « Tis the sword they love! » cited just above. Here the idea is twofold, and the sword, in the literal sense of the word, becomes for the feminine world of old days a kind of symbol of emancipation, an outward and visible sign to be held in veneration, as well as sometimes the token of tender or glorious memories, or else again merely a precious thing (2) in virtue of its intrinsic or

(1) « The *demoiselle* de Châteauneuf, one of the King's favourites before he went into Poland, having made a love match with Antinotti, a Florentine, Commander of the galleys at Marseilles, and having caught him playing the rake, slew him gallantly with her own hand. » L'Estoile. *Journal*, Sept. 1577.

(2) This custom of giving swords as presents dates from Ancient times. Ctesias of Cnidos, one of the comrades of

fictitious value. « I am fain, » says Kriemhild in the Nibelungenlied, « to keep the blade of Siegfrid (1); Mme d'Aubigné receives in legacy her husband's arms (2), while the Comtesse de Guichen, called *the fair Corisande*, presents Louis XIII, when still quite a child, with his first rapier (3).

Xenophon, relates in a passage preserved by Photius, how he had received two swords, one from the hands of Parisatis, mother of Artaxerxes, the other from those of the Great King himself. He adds : « If they are planted in the ground with the point in the air, they keep away clouds, hail and tempest. The King made trial of this before me at his own risk and peril. » (Ctesias, *in Indic. apud* Photium.)

Some swords possessed, owing to the richness of their mounting, a costliness amply justifying the value women, attached to them as presents.

At the baptism of Louis XIII, the Duc d'Epernon's sword was enriched with eight hundred diamonds, and was worth more than thirty thousand crowns.

(1) « She said : Ill hast thou repaired the ill thou hast done. But fain I am to keep the sword of Siegfrid. » *Nibelungenlied*, ch. XXXIX.

(2) The sword found in the Church of Saint Catherine-de-Fierbois. — *Procès de Jeanne Darc* (Trial of Joan of Arc), — and Allain Bouchard, *Chron. de Bretagne*, 1514.

(3) « The fair Corisande (Diane d'Andouins), ex-mistress of Henri Quatre, gives Louis XIII, when still a child, his first sword. » *Journal de Jean Heroard* (August. 7. 1602), publ. by Eud. Soulié, p. 4.

The fair Corisande was the cause of Henri IV losing all the fruits of the victory of Coutras. « So soon as ever the day was won, Henry disappeared, leaving his army in uncertainty as to what had become of him, and in ignorance of what they should do. Slain, taken prisoner, — they knew not what to think. Consternation drowned the joy of so triumphant a success, and the confusion inseparable from

In the South of Europe, women occasionally gave their lovers or received from them a sword, as a souvenir or love-token. Admiral Pero Nino, in 1407, sent his from Spain, all hacked as it was in battle, to his wife to remind her of his love (1).

Gio Battista Giraldi (XVIth. Century) relates in his *Novelli*, how in his time a certain courtesan of Ferrara, Philena by name, gave one of her lovers a beautiful sword all damascened with gold, which she had received as a present from a famous captain (2). Finally Quevedo, in his *Romances Amorosos*, a work written just when knightly manners were at

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such circumstances reduced the victors to inactivity, who might have done what they pleased after having totally defeat ed the Catholic host and killed the Duc de Joyeuse, its Commander, and his principal officers. Six or seven days passed thus, each increasing their state of fear and astonishment. At last the Prince appeared, and restored joy and tranquillity to his troops. He had galloped from the field of battle, attended by a single servant, and had gone to the furthest extremity of Gascony to present his lady with his victorious sword. »

(1) « His sword was like a saw, large pieces here and there hacked out, the hilt bent by having struck heavy blows, and all stained with blood. Subsequently Pero Nino sent this sword to France by the hands of a page, along with other presents, to his wife. » — Gutierre Diaz de Gamez, *Le Victorial*, — chronicle of Don Pedro Nino, translated by MM. de Circourt and de Puymaigre.

(2) « Philena, a courtesan, gives her lover, as a love-token, a very handsome sword all worked with gold after a marvellous fashion, the which had been formerly left her as a tender souvenir by a famous captain. » Gio Battista Giraldi, *Degli Ecatommiti*. — Introduction to IVth. Tale.

their fullest development, speaks of a swordsman who, by way of gallantry, makes a legacy of his rapier and arms to a lady in these words :

Mis espadas y armeria
Señora, os la mando à vos.

(To you, Lady, I leave my swords and arms ...) (1).

Yet another point serving to explain the favour accorded in the fancy of women to this the special weapon of gentlemen, — it must be remembered how in all ages it has played a part as one of the properties of nocturnal gallantries. Formerly the King of Spain never went to the Queen's chamber without his long espada (sword) under bis arm (2), and fortunate gallants never failed, once in their mistress's room, to hang their sword, in case of surprise, at the bed's head. It was for lovers the trusty guard that would feel no scruples in ridding them of a jealous husband or unsuccessful rival. « All is fair at night », Philippe de Commines said. The honoured weapon which the Castilians used to kiss every morning like a holy relic (3)

(1) Mis espadas y armeria,
Señora, os la mando a vos ;
Pues las armas del rendido
Propias son del vencedor.

(My swords and arms, Lady, I leave to you ; for the weapons of the vanquished belong of right to the conqueror.)— Quevedo, *Obras escogidas*, — Romances amorosos (Select Works, — Romances of Love), ch. II.

(2) « The King still has his great sword in one hand and the dark lantern in the other. He is bound to go thus accoutred all alone into the Queen's chamber. » — Mme d'Aulnoy. *Relation du Voyage d'Espagne* (Account of my Spanish Journey), vol. III.

(3) Mme d'Aulnoy, *Relation du Voyage d'Espagne*, 1879 ; The Hague 1705, vol. III.

dignified even murder, and was sometimes said « to be a fairy-sword » (1).

Moreovor the fact must never be lost sight of that as a means of providing summary justice then and there, it established a certain equilibrium or reciprocal dignity of conduct in married life, a certain mutual respect between man and wife, — those two individualities always inimical, yet bound together in fetters of love. Thus not a few gallant dames, from heroic times down, have taken delight, as did the Canaanitish women of old (2), in arming, or more strictly speaking in decorating, themselves with a sword as an advertisement of their intrepidity and emancipation. Women indeed are nothing if not gluttons of public notice ; hence witches. — twenty instances of these for every two of wizards (3) ; hence

(1) « A sword with a handle of iron and cross-hilted, known as the sword of Lancelot of the Lake ; and 'tis said it is a fairy-sword ». — *Inventory of the ancient Arms preserved at the Castle of Amboise, of the time of Louis XII.* (Sept., 1499).

(2) « Cardinal de Cusa deems that this prohibition for a man to wear women's clothes, and for a woman to wear those of a man, has reference to idolatry ; for that the Canaanitish women used to wear the accoutrements and arms of men, in honour of Mars, while the men dressed themselves as women, for Venus her sake. » — Philippe Camerarius. *Méditations historiques*, vol. II., Part II., ch. xix.

(3) The German Monk Sprenger, in his manual of the Inquisition, or « Witches' Hammer », asks the question why there are so few wizards and so many witches, and why the Devil has such a much better understanding with women. Later on he endeavours to explain this by noting the natural tendency of women towards all sorts of emotional excesses.

again female demoniacs, who took a positive pride, one and all, in their possession by the foul fiend.

The well-known device of Louise de Lorraine : *Aspice ut aspiciar*, « Look at me, that I may be looked at, » is essentially the expression of this ideal of defiance and ostentation, of this insatiable craving to be noticed, which animates the fairer half of mankind. The very same ideal, long before it had made swordswomen and rufflers of them, had already in ancient times given the world female gladiators (1).

A word or two as to their primitive arms. At first it was slave-women who in honour of a dead master of wealth and magnificence slew each other at his tomb ; later, the exaltation taking on a new character but still manifesting itself in paroxysms of contagious enthusiasm, grew after centuries of toleration, or better say at once encouragement, into a form of madness.

The female gladiators of Rome, having brought discredit on the patrician matrons in the Circus, led to combats being forbidden in which women fought in companies with each other, or women with dwarfs (2). suchlike combats being no less reprobated by Christianity. Swordswomen do not appear any more at all conspicuously till towards the end of the Middle Ages, and then only in isolated cases as heroines or adventuresses. From that time forth they are divisible into two quite distinct categories viz, mystics or heaven-

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(1) Chateaubriand, *Études ou Discours historiques*.

(2) Dio Cassius. *Hist. Rom.*, bk. LXXVI., mentions a combat of women, among whom figured as female gladiators ladies of the Roman patriciate, See note 12. above.

inspired enthusiasts on the one part, and giddy-pated swaggerers on the other, the two several classes being represented in France by the visionary Jeanne d'Arc and, at a much later date, by the actress Mlle de Maupin, no less famous in fence than expert in naughtiness (1).

(1) The most famous of all petticoated duellists was the actress Maupin, of whom exploits in this kind of a truly astonishing nature are told. She was born in Paris in 1673, her father being named Daubigny. She married young, and after sending her husband away into the provinces with a post in the taxes, she entered the Opera in 1698 as an actress. Passionately fond of fencing, she entered into a liaison with Serane, a fencing-master, and gained such a mastery over her weapon as almost eclipses that attained at a later day by the Chevalier, or Chevalière, d'Éon. Being one day insulted by the actor Dumény, her colleague, she lay in wait for him in the Place des Victoires, and having failed to induce him to take sword in hand, carried off his watch and snuff-box. Another of her colleages having similarly insulted her, she compelled him to ask her pardon on his knees.

» La Maupin was a Sappho, if not in wit, at any rate in habits, and she had the effrontery to be proud of it. Being present once at a ball, she allowed herself certain indecent and provocative gestures towards a lady. Three gentlemen who accompanied the latter tried in vain to stop her : she challenged them, forced them to leave the room with her and killed them all three. After this little interlude, she returned quite quietly into the ball-room again. » She was pardoned by the king eventually, her Biographer says.

She retired to Brussels, where she became the mistress of the Elector of Bavaria.

For further particulars as to Mlle de Maupin, see the extract from Émile Colombey's, *Histoire Anecdotique du Duel* (in Appendix).

CHAPTER III

Warlike Caprices of the Fair Sex.

Following the instinct of imitation attributed to sheep by Panurge, the feminine spirit of combativeness, which is nothing else at bottom but a blustering kind of coquetry, spread far and wide in Europe from the XVth. Century onwards. From that date on, it produced among the fantastic sex many strange tricks in mimicry of the hectoring ways of men.

« In my day », relates, about 1540, the Sieur César Gonzague in the Italian work entitled « The Complete Courtier (1), « women play at ball, practise arms and horsemanship, follow the chase, in fact participate in pretty much all the exercises a gentleman can do. » — « Some were accoutred like men-at-arms, » Brantôme says. In every Century, from the days of chivalry, are to be found repeated instances of fair ladies of a dashing spirit playing at soldiers in suchlike ways. As a diversion German women used to hold female tournaments (2), and the Bolognese ladies jousted with one

(1) Baltasar Castillonois (il Conte). *The Complete Courtier ;* the French version, *Le parfait Courtesan*, by Gabriel Chapuys, of Tours, Paris, 1585.

(2) Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, *Gesammtabenteuer*, « A hundred old German Tales. »

« Tournaments have also been sometimes carried out by

another; Italian dames, like Chinzica Ghismondi, fenced in good earnest, or defended towns, while Catarina Segurana, it would seem, disputed the possession of Provence like a stalwart fighter as she was with the Barbary corsairs.

The gentlemen are fired with admiration for such « brilliant exploits », which in turn rouse their spirit of daring bravado: while in those days not a few girls of noble houses are to be found from infancy vowed as it were to the sword. La Châtaigneraye, when her daughter was still quite little, was for ever putting a naked sword and dagger into her hands, wishing she said to make an *amazon* of her (1).

Observe this; southern lands have always produced these women of the sword in far greater numbers than temperate or cold climes. Apart from the amazons of Bohemian legend, the shield maidens (2) of Iceland,

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women, and these new-fashioned bold amazons, in all modesty, have ended up the fights in the lists with dances and contests of arms by companies, as we have seen lately in the great hall of the Counts Bentivoglio. »

Il Giuoco de' cavalieri, discorso sopra le giostre ed i tornei del Sig. Senator Berlingiero Gessi (The Diversion of Gentlemen; a Discourse on Jousts and Tourneys by the Senator Berlingiero Gessi), Bologna 1671.

« The Comte de Louvigny, one of the lovers of Mme de Rohan, made Mlle de Rohan, who was at that time only a child, practise with a great cutlass-sword he had. This was to teach her, he used to say to know what a cutting edge is. » — Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes*, vol. II.

(1) Brantôme, *Grands Capitaines*, — Monsieur de La Chastaigneraye

(2) « The shield-maidens ». — H. Wheaton, *History of the*

and a few Teutonic female champions, very few warlike women are heard of, since barbarian times, in the North of Europe. On the other hand in Italy, the land where Luca de Pulci (1) and Ariosto dreamed their far-famed warrior-maids, there were several different types of *cavalieressi* (lady-cavaliers). This name, so suggestive of charm and airy grace, was equally applicable to the « very noble Luzia Stanga », who « sword in hand, intimidated many brave men », to the famous Margheritona (2), who served as a trooper in a company of light-horse, or lastly to the courtesan Malatesta, mentioned by Bandello, who used to go

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Northmen or Danes and Normans. This is an American work, first published in 1831. There is a French translation by Guillot, Paris (Marc-Aurèle) 1844.

(1) Luca de Pulci, *Ciriffo Calvaneo*, p. 25 of Florence edition, 1834.

(2) « A girl named Margheritona, a courtesan, served for pay as a trooper in the squadron of light horse of the Count de Gaiazzo. » — Bandello, *XVth. Novella*, dedication.

Bandello likewise mentions as *cavalieressi* or swordswomen « the very noble Luzia Stanga, who sword in hand intimidates many brave men »; also the daughter of the gardener of the very learned Signor Alessandro Bentivoglio, who defended her father, the latter being unarmed, against two *sbirri* (police-agents). Having put hand to sword, she killed one of the constables and gave the other a sword thrust. Lastly, he speaks of a beautiful Greek girl named Marcella, who at the siege of Counio by the Turks, on seeing her father slain at her feet, seized his sword and *rotella*, and driving back the Turks, killed several of them, and finally drove them out of the island.

forth at night to her love adventures armed with a *rotella* (small round shield) and a sword, — which he adds she managed with not a little dexterity (1). Religious recluses moreover beyond the Alps at times donned the sword, when they went disguised as gallants and masked to assignations or to enjoy the gaieties of the carnival (2).

(1) Bandello, created Bishop of Agen by Henri II. in 1550, relates in his 50th. Novella, that in his time (1504-1515) there dwelt at Lyons a certain courtesan of the name of Malatesta, who was accustomed to go at night time to her assignations armed with a sword and *rotella*, which she knew how to use in a very bold and very dextrous fashion. « Ella di notte con la sua spada e la rotella partiva dall albergo » (She a-nights with her sword and her *rotella* would forth from the inn).

H. Bayle states that Bandello invented nothing in his *Novelle*, and says all of them are founded on actual occurrences. — Stendhal, *Promenade dans Rome* (A Walk in Rome).

(2) « Moreover on those days it is not forbidden the recluses to dress up as gentlemen, with velvet caps on their heads, tight fitting hose, and having sword at side. » — Le Lasca, *Introduzione al Novellare* (Introduction to the Art of Novel-writing.)

« As late as the XVIIIth. Century nuns in Italy carried the stiletto. An Abbess thus armed fought with another lady for the Abbey of Pomponne ». — Le Président de Brosses, *Lettres familières* écrites d'Italie. (Familiar Letters from Italy), vol. I.

Suchlike licence was at its height towards the end of the XVIIth. Century. An example is afforded by « the reckless folly of Madame de Fontenac, a religious recluse at Poissy, who not content with playing the harlot generally, set her

Spain, where at the present day enterprising young women are to be seen taking the part of *espadas* at the bull-fights at which young bulls are baited, had no less than Italy its fighting women in the days when its *manolas* (common wenches) wore the *cuchillo* (poniard) (1) in their garters, which were embroidered with various mottos.

Cervantes in one of his Romances relates as quite an ordinary incident of his day, how a young man practises arms with his mistress, a *muy diestra* (most skilful hand) (2). Another skilful lady-fencer again is

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mind upon dancing a ballet with five other nuns and their six gallants. They went to St. Germains, where the King was at the time. It was supposed at first the ballet had come out from Paris; but by next morning the real truth was known. » — Tallemant des Réaux, Note to the *Historiette no. 69;* Cardinal de Richelieu.

« Nuns indulge in riotous living, receiving masks handed them through the convent *grilles*. Also they disguise themselves in all sorts of ways. They go to the play, and you can feast with them at tables made on purpose, the one half of which is inside, the other half outside, the *grille* of the parlours in their convents. » Misson. *Voyage d'Italie*, 1668, vol. II.

(1) *Las del cuchillo en la liga*, « they of the poniard in their garter ». This was the name given in old Spanish to the *manolas* thus armed. Their garters were embroidered with gallant mottos of this sort : « I shall be beautiful as the rose. » — « You are soft as honey ». — « Lovely as Rachel. » — « The fine lady prefers lilac garters. » — « Love gives happiness, especially in solitude. » — Baron Davillier, *Voyage d'Espagne*.

(2) Luis Velez de Guevara. *El Diablo cojuelo*. (« Le Diable Boiteux », The Limping Devil).

mentioned in the *Diable Boiteux*; and a very curious Chronicle records the fact that a certain nun of Spanish origin, Doña Catalina de Erauso (1), known as the *monja alferez* (the nun ensign), who longed to be a Captain like the « Virgin del Pilar » (Virgin of the Pillar) (2) in the Aragonese ballad, was famous in the

(1) « The ruffler Doña Catalina de Erauso, nicknamed the *Monja Alferez*, that is the Nun-Ensign, fought a large number of duels between the years 1607 and 1645, killing several of her opponents and getting severely wounded herself in some of these encounters. »

« Dressed in men's clothes after the Spanish mode, she professes herself a swordsman, and carries her sword with spirit. » — Pedro del Valle.

(2) The Virgin del Pilar, in accordance with a curious Portuguese custom which gave the saints in vogue such a rank in the army, was in 1808 nominated by the Aragonese Captain-General of their troops, as a *Jota* (Catch, of the time has it:

La Virgen del Pilar dice
Que no quiere ser Francese,
Que quiere ser capitana
De la tropa aragonesa.

« The Virgin del Pilar says, she will not be a Frenchwoman, that she will be Captain of the army of Aragon. »

On the day of his coronation, the King of Spain, after the *Te Deum*, makes his way to the Chapel in which stands the statue of the Virgen del Pilar, an image more highly revered than God himself by all Aragon. « It is a small figure of wood, dressed up in precious stuffs so as to leave only the head of the Virgin visible, surrounded by a dazzling aureole. It is a privilege accorded to the King only, to kiss this Virgin.

In the last Century, many towns and provinces in Spain still had each their own special Virgin.

years 1607 to 1645 for the fights and duels she engaged in.

In the foggy Northern regions of Europe hardly a single instance is to be found of a genuine martial heroine, with the one exception of Hannah Snell an Englishwoman, nicknamed the "girl-soldier" (1). She was a late survival and representative in that country of the stalwart swordswomen who in other lands wore the rapier and made a noise in the world of an earlier day. In France on the contrary their exploits were frequent enough at various periods, and are mentioned by many authors. La Colombière (2) speaks of two

(1) Hannah Snell was born at Worcester in 1723. She served with credit in the Army and died pensioned by her country.

Another Englishwoman, who lived to 108, may also be mentioned as having worn the sword in service. In her youth she had enlisted in the 5th. regiment of foot. At the battle of Fontenoy she was wounded in the arm by a bayonet thrust. George IV., granted her a pension of 10 shillings a week.

These two instances of soldierly heroines however really have, except incidentally, nothing to do with our subject. England, like the Northern countries generally, has never produced any swordswomen strictly so called. I am sure of this owing to the kind and able help of Mr. George Chapman, who has been so good as to carry out at my suggestion minute investigations on this point in the British Museum.

See also *History of Duelling*, by J. C. Mellingen, M. D., F. R. S., 2 vols, 8vo. London, 1841.

(2) About the year 1640 there were in Provence « two young ladies who, abandoning the pleasures and politeness of their sex, fought a duel with the sword only, and gave

rival courtesans who from motives of jealousy fought it out with swords on a Parisian boulevard; while Tallemant des Réaux mentions sundry swordswomen and female rufflers who were famous in his own lifetime, — amongst others Mme de Château-Gay, « a fair and gallant lady, who was accustomed to send cartels to her lovers » ; her sister, of an equally roistering temper, whose delight was to pass her leisure time in snuffing candles with an arquebus (1); Mme de Samois,

each other several wounds. A like thing happened in Paris five or six years ago between two ladies of pleasure of considerable attractions, who fought with short swords on the boulevard de la Porte Saint-Antoine, and wounded each other several times in the face and on the bosom, to which parts the hatred and jealousy they felt towards one another made them aim most of their blows. Two years afterwards, when on an expedition into the country with seven or eight of my friends, we met one of these women in a garden, who being asked to do so by one of the chief personages of the company present, who was of her acquaintance, told us with no little wit and spirit the story of the duel, and lifting her neckerchief showed us a wound she had received on the side of her right breast. » — Vulson de la Colombière, *Théâtre d'honneur et de la chevalerie* (Theatre of Honour and Chivalry).

(1) « There were two sisters living in Auvergne, both of them gallant ladies. The one, who was married to a M. de Château-Gay, of Murat, was both gallant and handsome ; she was generally to be seen on horseback, wearing huge top-boots, kilted skirts and a man's wide-brimmed hat with steel trimmings and feathers to crown all, sword by side and pistols at saddle-bow. » While her husband was yet living, M. d'Angoulême, then Comte d'Auvergne, fell in love with her ; and when he was arrested by M. d'Heurre,

« who was fain to fight a duel in every field corner », and Mme de Saint-Balmont, who was never without a sword at her side, and was reputed to have taken or killed more than four hundred men (1). The same author tells how a certain Mlle Liance, having one day given Benserade, who was by way of taking

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Captain of a private Company of Light-Horse, to which this prince was by way of showing himself ill disposed, she swore to be avenged on this M. d'Heurre. After she was a widow, she had another lover named M. de Codières ; he made her jealous and she challenged him to a duel. He accepted the challenge ; and when he began by playing the fool, she pressed him so hard it was all he could do to master her ; eventually he threw her right on the ground and so made his peace for good and all. She had a grievance against certain gentlemen of her neighbourhood named MM. de Gane. One day she met them at the chase. A gentleman, one of her people and who acted as her squire, said to her : « Let us go back, madam ; they are three to one. » « What matter? » she replied. « It shall never be said I encountered them without attacking them. » She does attack them, and they were cowardly enough to kill her. She made every possible resistance. » — Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiette* 460 ; *Femmes vaillantes*.

For more particulars as to this Mme de Château-Gay, and her equally enterprising sister (see Appendix), containing extracts from Émile Colombey's. *Histoire anecdotique du duel*, and a further quotation from Tallemant des Réaux.

(1) Barbe d'Ernecourt, comtesse de Saint-Balmont, born at Neuville in 1608. — *Mémoires de l'abbé Arnauld*, in the « Collection Michaud et Poujoulat ».

See also, below « Ladies as Duellists », from Émile Colombey's, *Histoire anecdotique du duel*.

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liberties with her, « a great blow in the chest with her fist », at the same moment drew a short sword she always wore in her girdle and said to him, « Were you not in my own house, I would run my poniard into you. » (1)

It only remains to name, as the last of French lady-duellists, — to make no mention of those spoken of in the Letters of Mme Dunoyer, — Henriette-Sylvie de Molière (2), and finally Mlle Durieux, who Saint-Foix relates in his *Essais sur Paris*, one day attacked and fought her lover in the open street.

So it went on. It would be easy enough to cite yet other examples, down to the days of the Chevalière d'Éon, of these strange, strenuous caprices which now and again the « charming sex », prescriptively sacred for us men, — shame on Diomed, who wounded Cypris ! — would permit themselves, previous to the

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(1) Tallemant des Réaux. *Historiette* 388 : *Mademoiselle Liance.*

(2) Mme de Villedieu mentions a duel with swords between Henriette-Sylvie de Molière and another lady. Both combatants were dressed as men. — Mme de Villedieu, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. VII.

Mme Dunoyer speaks in her Letters of a meeting between a lady of Beaucaire and a young lady of birth, who fought with swords in a garden, and would have killed each other, had they not been separated. This duel had been, according to rule, preceded by a formal challenge.

Saint-Foix in his *Essais sur Paris* mentions a Mlle Durieux who fought in the open street with a certain Antinotti, her lover. In 1742 a young lady of Versailles did the same. — Barbier. *Journal.*

date when, more to be in the fashion than from any real anaemic taint, they began to make an affectation of extreme delicacy.

CHAPTER IV

Analogies between Women and the Sword. — « Merry Maidens » or Ladies of the Camp; Female Crusaders.

To account for the strange attraction exercised over women by the flashing blade of a sword, one might well be tempted, over and above the various natural causes above enumerated, to seek some further occult reason, some mysterious spiritual connection between the two.

Pagan traditions point to a certain affinity, a certain kinship, existing between the weapon so highly prized and the creature so fondly loved. Pandora, first of mortal women to possess the beauty of Venus, the strength of Hercules and the courage of Mars, was we know the creation of Vulcan, the divine sword-maker who forged the blades the gods wielded. Out of this notion of their identity of origin was evolved in the thought of men, pondering in dreamy reverie, a sort of relationship of the sword with womankind.

If this mythical connection of the two be not allowed, at any rate this much must be admitted, that the feints and rallies of fence, in which address and dexterous cunning outface and outmanœuvre mere fury and brute force, embody a something elegant, subtle and treacherous, that inevitably recalls the character

and general disposition of a woman. Some confirmation of this last idea is to be found in the epithet of a *keen blade* (1), in common use in old days to signify a coquette. Martine was the name given to his rapier by a certain champion of the sword mentioned by Brantôme.

On a further examination into such analogies, these latter are observed as appearing likewise in the guise of a general resemblance between the women and the swords peculiar to each country, Both, in the Germanic and Swedish regions of the North, are as a rule large and of heavy build ; both have, the one in love, the other in fence, something ponderous and stiff about them. On the other hand, in the South of Europe, in Greece, Italy, Spain, sword and woman are alike slender and elegant, dainty in movement, and similarly decked out with gold, symbol of the sun and of the brown-haired races. The comparison may even be elaborated a step further; in Turkey, as in the East generally, in all lands where the languid Mussulman beauties of the Harem throw their limbs into listless curves and lie couched in snake-like coils, swords are mostly bent, flexible and supple as Oriental dancing-girls in their undulating postures, and like them overloaded with gold and jewels.

The mention of these two words leads us to speak next of the dashing dames who have ever been allured by the gallant show of military pomp and luxury. All

(1) « A keen blade : a woman expert in ruses. » — Rivarol, *French Dictionary*.

the extravagance and all the cupidity the female heart is capable of, under the strong seductions love exerts when its arrows are of gold, is displayed frankly and openly from century to century in the guise of those courtesans of the camp whose original patron deity was Venus Victrix.

From times the most remote, hordes of women were wont to follow armies in the field, devoting themselves to the life of camps and the fortunes of the Sword. — always lavish of its gifts after pillage, which in turn was stimulated by the hope of carnal gratifications to follow. « A portion of the booty made by Mars in war ever goes to the profit of Priapus », is the moral appended to a certain Bithynian Fable.

The Greek warriors, for instance those who took part in the famous Retreat of the Ten Thousand, all had their *hetaerae*, or camp-ladies, the majority of whom were free-born and were attended by slave-women attached to their service, while the Lydians were accustomed to carry along with them in the field dancing-girls and flute-players to amuse their leisure. These habits of Antiquity survived in the Middle ages, and a class of rapacious adventuresses, a sort of *forlorn hope* of Love, is found numerously represented in the Crusades. « The Frank soldiers », an Arab writer says, « will not go to battle, if deprived of women. »

Some of these women, — it became quite a fashion of the time, — took the Cross along with their lovers, we are told by Guibert de Nogent (1), and fought in

(1) « William, Count of Poitiers, had taken along with

the battles against the Infidel. The Emperor Conrad was accompanied in Syria by a troop of amazons ; and the letters of Pope Boniface VIII, prove that in the year 1383 a contingent of Genoese ladies, fully armed, joined in a Crusade against the Turks (1).

The *galoises*, *donzelles*, *and gaillardes*, (camp-girls, ladies of pleasure, wantons) of camp and field still figure as late as the XVth. and XVIth. Centuries in the train of warlike Princes; in France they even formed a part of the household under the title of « the Royal filles de joie », and were originally under the care of the « king of the gallants », who held the rank of Captain.

During the occupation of Saint-Denis, the Maid of Orleans broke her famous sword of Fierbois striking

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him a swarm of girls. » — Guibert de Nogent. *Gesta Dei per Francos.* (God's Deeds by the hands of the Franks), bk. VII.

« The Monk de Vigeois, about 1180, speaking of the licence which at that time prevailed among the troops, declared he had counted in one of our armies as many as fifteen hundred concubines, whose illicit gains reached incalculable sums. » — Sainte-Palaye. *Mémoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie* (Treatise on ancient Chivalry), II., notes.

(1) Misson in his *Voyage d'Italie* (1688) says at Genoa he was shown in the small arsenal of the Palazzo-Real, or Royal Palace, a number of cuirasses and helmets for women, which he was told had belonged to certain Genoese ladies who in 1301 joined a Crusade against the Turks.

In confirmation of this and as proving the accuracy of his statement, Misson quotes three letters from Pope Boniface VIII (preserved among the archives of Genoa) where much is said as to the warlike infatuation of these ladies.

with the flat of its blade one of the camp-girls that followed her soldiers. I mention the fact in connexion with this part of my subject only as showing both the muscular vigour and the pure morality of the Virgin of Domrémy.

Later still, the *garces militaires* (soldiers' wenches) were known as « ladies of pleasure following the Court », in other words following the Sword. On May-day, sacred to lovers and the budding year, they were wont to present the King with a bouquet as a Spring-tide Valentine (1).

In War these « merry maidens », not being subject to capture, paid no ransom and met with general consideration. They displayed the greatest luxury, « wearing jewels, dress, attire and other ornaments forbid to other the like votaries of pleasure », — surely an alluring privilege for any daughter of Eve even amongst the ranks of *honest women !*

Occasionally too, — and in large numbers as in quite ancient times, — they actually followed the troops when the latter took the field. Accompanying the army of the Duke of Alva in Flanders were to be seen « four hundred mounted courtesans, fair and gallant as Princesses, and eight hundred a-foot as well, very well appointed ». There were eight hundred present with Strozzi's forces, about 1578 (2). Do not such facts

(1) « My Lord Saint Valentine, patron saint of lovers. » — Martial d'Auvergne, *Arresta Amorum*. See also with reference to St. Valentine's day note I, p. 20, of Sir Walter Scott's « Fair Maid of Perth ».

(2) "M. de Strossi, albeit extraordinarily strict, as indeed

find their only natural explanation in the two great factors already repeatedly referred to, viz. pleasure and self-interest, motives swaying all human action ?

To restrain the follies the attraction of such a life led women to commit, an edict was published in 1516 to this effect : « Any woman quitting her husband and following in man's clothes and adulterously after men-at-arms, shall be beaten naked with rods through the town » (1). In spite of all this the boldest spirits « went a-field and scoured the country-side in company of their *gallants*, or lovers ; whilst others again fell to the lure of various popular ballads of the day. One of these rhymed catches tells how a noble Captain carries off his lady love, and dresses her all in white satin at the first town he comes to ; at the second, he decks her in still braver attire ; finally at the third town, he *clothes her in gold and diamonds*. And « so handsome was she, she passed for queen in the regiment », adds the last couplet. — surely well adapted to wake ambitious dreams in feminine bosoms.

By their craving for luxury and ostentation women

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he had sufficiently manifested by ordering eight hundred « filles de joie » that followed his camp to be thrown into the river Loire ». — VARILLAS. *Histoire de Henry III*, vol. III.

(1) «For having quitted her husband and followed after men-at-arms, in man's clothes and adulterously (according to the terms of the edict of the Court of Parliament of June 20, 1515), the said woman was condemned to be beaten naked, with rods, on a market day, through the public streets of the town. »

have always encouraged the rapacity of Soldiers, as pointed out already. By way of corroboration take an instance dating only from the War of 1870. « Dear John » (this is how the Gretchens of *honourable* Germany write to soldier-lovers in the XIXth. Century), « if you should go into a Jeweller's shop, where you could do some *loot*, *choose me* a pair of earrings. This would please me so much, etc. » (1).

In former days, in order to please the ladies, every soldier, every gentleman, affected the costly splendour of the « conquering hero. » The Ancient world shows us Demetrius, the lover of Lamia, maintaining amongst his personal attendants forty-six *plaiters of garlands* and a still larger number of compounders of essences and perfumes. Senseless and extravagant luxury of the sort has been known at all periods. We read in an old English Chronicle that in the XIVth. Century John Earl of Arundel had fifty-two complete suits of cloth of gold. Luxurious display is Love's twin-brother; and we must learn to recognise the fact.

(1) « The following letter has been communicated to us, » says the editor of the *Électeur Libre*, a translation of which we print. It was found on an infantryman named Johann Dietrich, 7th. Company of the 88th. Regiment, 11th. Army-corps, 21st. Division, 42nd. Brigade of the German Army. »
« The letter ends thus : ..... « Dear John, — If you should go into a jeweller's shop, where you could do some loot, choose me a pair of earrings. This would please me so much, and would be a souvenir of the War for me. .....

MARGARETHE SCHNEIDER,
Freiendiez, this 20th. Dec. 1870. »

In Turkey as in all parts of the East where sentiment reigns paramount, and even in France itself, where Dunois' sword « was reckoned worth 20,000 gold crowns, for it was mounted with rich jewelled work », arms of parade, personal symbols as it were of a soldier's importance and nobility, were enriched with every possible adornment of gold and precious stones. There were jewels to the value of 225,000 livres (L. 9,000 sterling) on the hilt of the *kandjar* carried by Ali-beg, while « the Duc d'Épernon, on days of state, wore a sword mounted with eighteen hundred diamonds ». Easy to guess how ladies encouraged suchlike extravagancies, which were after all merely a means of giving expression to the wish to please them, and which in some degree served to excuse their own exorbitant toilet expenses « in pearls, precious stones, robes of cloth of gold and silver ». Thus the innate prodigality of the Sword, yet further exaggerated by the spirit of gallantry, tended in every way to women's advantage, and the rich plunder soldiers won was either wasted to gratify feminine caprice or came eventually into feminine hands in the form of lavish presents.

« Courage, comrades ! » a Captain of the XVIth. Century cries to his men, « before long time I will set you measuring velvet with your pikes as ell-wands, » (1) — a fascinating phrase it is easy to guess the meaning of.

After the sack of Genoa and the pillage of Antwerp,

(1) Brantôme. *Grands Capitaines :* M. de Salvoyson.

the Spanish soldiery, « rich and coiny », not knowing how to carry their gold, lavished it on every part of their arms and accoutrements and loaded themselves with it under the form of chains and gewgaws of all kinds « in such wise that the most part bedecked their swords all over with gold, — as guards, hilts and all such parts » (1). About the same period, a simple Corporal, Albret by name, attended Mass, « dressed from head to foot in green satin, the stripes of his trunk-hose all strung with double ducats, angels and nobles, down to his very shoes » (2). Small and great, all were proportionately extravagant. Raleigh, as ambassador, came to the Court of Queen Elizabeth attired in a suit of armour of massive silver. Finally, at a still later date, in the Century of the Cavaliers when the rapacity of the fair sex had lost all sense of restraint, Buckingham stirred the hearts of Queens by scattering abroad the pearls from the embroidery of his cloak as he walked.

As may be readily supposed, this ostentatious luxury displayed in the emulation of their gallantry by men of the sword, from King and great Captain down to plain Corporal, was of no little influence as affecting the aspect of War in former days. Women, and above all light women, have in all ages, cunning and self-interest acting in unison, provoked in men of birth an extravagant and inordinate vanity in dress.

There can be no doubt that the various fashions con-

(1) Brantôme. *Grands Capitaines* : Connestable de Bourbon.
(2) Brantôme. *Couronnels françois* : M. de Bonnivet.

demned by different sumptuary laws were originated by the action and re-action, sentimental or sensual, of the Sword on women, and of women on the Sword. This action and re-action, from the earliest days of Chivalry, has determined not only the successive aspects of old-world societies, but also the leading features of their works of Art and the main outlines of their trading activity.

« It is women of gallantry, » Helvetius declares, « who by stimulating the industry of such workers as minister to luxury, make these latter from day to day more and more useful to the State. »

CHAPTER V

Gown and Sword. — The man of Peace and the Man of War.

The better to bring out all the powers of seduction which the sword and its prestige exercised in old days over women's minds, it is needful to display, in contrast with it, the different aspects of ill-will and hostility assumed by its younger sister, the Gown.

As descriptive title to what is to follow might really be put the heading Étienne Pasquier gives to one of the chapters in his Book, *Les Recherches de la France*, viz. "Arms of Gentlefolk as Compared with the Pen and the Long Robe."

To go back to the origin of the Lawyer's Gown. It proceeds in the order of social evolution from the *toga*, chosen costume of the ancient Latin magistrates.

Under the primitive political organization of barbarous nations, every man was by necessary obligation a fighter, including even the priest; the gown as a symbol of special functions only began to play its distinctive part at a comparatively late period.

It was in the heart and centre of Europe, towards the end of the Middle Ages, that as a consequence of the multiplication of Universities and their growing

importance, it began to display its various aspects to best advantage.

The old Scandinavian and Teutonic world, exclusively warlike in its original constitution, was composed of two classes and two classes only, — the two sexes, under the general names of « Sword and Distaff » (1). But later, when the civilization of the North had reached a certain point in its development, the Sword tolerated, and eventually freely allowed, outside and independent of its own prerogatives, the special functions and privileges of *clerks* and legists. Hence the origin of the *tiers état* (the Third Estate) of 1310, and the starting point of the castes and classes of modern life.

At first the chief posts appertaining to the priestly gown were invariably coveted by the military aristocracy (2), and so arose the high clergy of the days of Chivalry, ever thirsting after rich bishoprics. Under Charlemagne, the Bishops (3) were soldiers, and long subsequently to his date Abbots and even monks

(1) Kinsmen on the side of the Sword, or *Swertmage ;* kinsmen on the side of the Spindle (or Distaff), or *Spillmage*.

(2) « When the warlike nobility saw the honours and riches there were in the Episcopate, they laid hands on it. Chiefs who lived by the sword and never left off their armour, were little likely to bend to the idea of a power stripped of arms. They entered the Church with their arms and their old habits ; they took with them there the life of camps. » — Ozanam, *Germans before Christianity*.

(3) « In 803, at the assembly of Worms, a petition was presented to Charlemagne, begging that the Bishops should not be compelled to go to the wars. » — Ozanam, *Civilization among the Franks*.

were still trained in the practice of arms (1). — The Apostles themselves had to some extent been swordsmen (2), and St. Peter resigned only one of the two swords he bore (3).

After this half warlike, half religious, state of things had lasted a very considerable time, the masculine world at length split definitively into two sections, — a separation recognized in the Laws of Saxony, or *Sachsenspiegel* (4). Then the flower of the lowborn

(1) « In a Latin poem composed by Adalbéron, Bishop of Làon, who died in 1030, it is described how the monks of Cluny ask their Abbot with loud cries what arms they are to adopt; the latter answers them as follows. First of all hang your hollowed bucklers at your neck; fasten above your robes a cuirasse framed of triple folds; let the shining belts that bind your loins keep your helm on; let your dagger rest like a crown on your head that is bound with straps; carry your pikes behind your back, and hold your sword between your teeth. » — *Dialogue avec le Roi Robert* (Dialogue with King Robert), Collection Guizot, vol, VI.

(2) Some of the Apostles wore swords. — St. Luke, XXII, 36. — Giotrus, VI.

In the Garden of the Mount of Olives, « Jesus turned his thoughts to means of defence and spoke of swords. There were two among the band. Enough, said our Lord. He did not follow up the thought in any overt act. » — Renan. *Vie de Jésus.*

(3) The Law of Suabia declares that « St. Peter receives of God the two swords; he keeps for himself the sword ecclesiastical, and hands over the temporal sword to the Emperor ». — *Epist. Schwert.* — Ozanam. *Germanic Studies*, vol. II.

(4) Laws of Saxony, — the *Sachsenspiegel*, — recognize the separation of the two powers. — *Epist. Ludovici II ad Basiliscum imperatorem* (Letter of Louis II, to the Emperor Basil.)

classes, bedizened in the mongrel costume which has nothing whether of the robe of chivalry or of the short soldier's cloak, rallies under the sign of the « temporal sword », the sword of Justice. But this down to the XVI th. Century continues to be habitually dominated by the Sword in Council of State.

So soon as the gown, thus humble in its first beginnings, felt itself by dint of numbers and superior cunning strong enough to make some show of restiveness, it soon forgot the fact that all such as were unarmed had originally taken refuge under the protection of the Sword. *Clerks* are mentioned in very early times as hangers-on of the Breton and Highland Chiefs.

Human ingratitude grows with what it feeds on, and presently the lawyer, and indeed the man of intellectual activity generally, is pricked by jealousy. Particularly where women are concerned, these classes make an obstinate revolt against the primitive claims of mere muscular superiority, — against the aristocracy of brute force and the lordship of the Sword. All the while humouring its rival with hypocritical flattery, the Gown incessantly tends more and more as civilization progresses to usurp and minimise the political power of the sturdy party of arms, which it is for ever striving to overwhelm. Such a spirit issues in the emancipation and gradual aggrandisement of the caste of petticoated pedants, a sort of neutral beings betwixt and between the two sexes. These men, laymen yet with ways and looks that smack of the churchman, seem to have grown into something that is neither male nor female, while their pettifogging trade makes them

by its official exigencies for the most part ugly or undersized.

The species, being presently reinforced by recruits drawn from the encroaching middle classes, increases and multiplies in all quarters, supplying the world with schoolmen and students of all sorts, doctors of law, advocates, physicians, officials of the Courts, of Finance and of Police, and last, but not least noxious, attorneys. From these categories, all going unarmed from an affectation of gentle harmlessness and in accordance with the decrees of the Sword, comes the *pékin* (civilian) of 1811. So by degrees does the Gown make good its footing and end by stamping an indelible mark on social life. Our next business is to follow it up in its intimate relations with the fair sex in days of yore.

From the first moment when under new social conditions this new power makes itself felt, Woman, having now lost those early prerogatives of hers which rested on charlatanry and superstition, is left standing undecided in the comedy of the affections, like Rosina in the play, between Almaviva, the glorious sword, and Basile, the canting black gown. Remains to characterize by sundry details the pitiful part played in matters of gallantry by the Gown alongside the Sword.

It has already been mentioned how, under the prompting of mystic motives, — motives which made themselves felt once more at the Crusades, — there occurred occasional instances of creatures of the robe in primitive periods being favoured by the sex. Intri-

guing women were found who came ot an understanding with pagan priests, offering as these did the strongest antithesis to the heroes who defied Heaven (1), and the soldiers devoted, as was the Samnite usage, to the infernal gods.

In Antiquity *hetaerae*, courtesans, whether from vitiated taste or simply as wishing to set the world talking of them, formed and at the same time compromised some famous men of the gown, some philosophers paltry, pretentious or cynical. Certain of them took as lovers writers, like Gorgias or Apollodorus (2), or orators like Hyperides, masters of the eloquence that thrills mankind. The latter, their sensual nature stirred by their fair clients, would make speeches in panegyric of their charms or defend them before the Court of Areopagus against the accusations of Demosthenes. All this is quite true, but it does not prove that the Gown has ever been able, since the gods of Greece fell, in open gallantry to enterinto serious rivalry with the Sword.

Quid pluma levius ?... Mulier. — Quid muliere ? Nihil, (What is lighter than a feather? A woman. What is lighter than a woman? Nothing), is

(1) «Nothing is commoner in the old tales of the Scandinavians than the type of warriors who boast they can do without the gods, can laugh at spirits and believe in nothing but their sword, » — Ozanam. *The Germans before Christianity*, vol. I.

Frithiof's Saga, — *Olaf Tryggvason Saga*. — *Owarolds Saga* — XXXX Laudnam, I, ch. II.

(2) Apollodorus wrote a Treatise on *Courtesans*.

the phrase found in a Latin Satire. It means nothing more nor less than this; women have always hated morality and seriousness, precise knowledge and deliberate wisdom, which in their eyes are merely silly and hypocritical pretentions that mark the class of professional phrase-mongers.

Indeed for women the Gown, that triumph of muscular indolence, that sexual anomaly as monstrous as the dragon born of the embraces of Mars and Venus, — the Gown, whence springs the type of creatures that tear each other to pieces with tongue and pen, — the Gown, that has ever been pedantic and inquisitorial, for ever putting awkward questions and making spiteful epigrams, systematically using a jargon unintelligible in style and diction to plain folk, could not but, if looked at in this light, (and precisely in this light women have always looked at it), be absolutely antipathetic to their whole nature. All disadvantages then being on the side of the Gown, and just the opposite, all the pleasures and delightful follies on that of the Sword, it is easy to explain how the frivolous sex was bound vastly to prefer the latter. Nay! more, this preference could readily be justified simply and solely on the ground of attacks, vexations and abuse, for which ladies, courtesans and goodwives alike, have always had to thank the moralists and other canting personages of the long-robed kind, whom they would treat with open scorn in face of the Sword.

Before quoting sundry depreciatory remarks on the part of foxes who find the grapes sour, — at a masque in the reign of Philippe the Fair, a fox was represent-

ed dressed as a *clerk*, — it is worth while noting the curious fact that ever since the epoch when first women learned how to write, not one of them has so far produced, from a collective stand-point, any serious critique of man in general. Yet it cannot be from want of knowing us.

It would be only prudent on our part, forgetting our absurd masculine pride, to entertain some distrust, when we see them, no doubt as a matter of tactics, treat us with so scornful a pity. Their indulgent reticence contrasts curiously with the biting Satires and coarse sarcasms which certain authors in every age have directed against them.

From the first origins of the Gown in Ancient times down to the just-past days of our modern philosophers, every man capable of observing and remembering has let fly at women some vindictive epigram, or at any rate once in a way in his writings has wreaked his spite on the fair sex.

Plato, exasperated against a faithless woman, develops his whole theory of beauty without once naming them. Seneca speaks of her as an animal devoid of shame (1); a Doctor of the Church, the prudish Origen, suppressed her altogether in the after life as being both useless and dangerous; another pedant had yet earlier declared her to be a *nocivum genus* (noxious kind); still another, following St. Paul who called her an instrument of the Devil, describes her as possessed

(1) Seneca. *De Constantia sapiente* (Of a Wise Constancy), XV, 10, 4.

of the Evil One; lastly, in the VIth. Century a particularly fine specimen of the narrow-minded pedant, a speaker at the Council of Mâcon, tried to prove that women have no souls. The Assembly voted on the question, and the Being thus traduced owed it only to a slender majority that she was recognized as forming part of the human species. (1) Judge to what lengths « the hypocrisy and spitefulness of churchmen », (this is the expression employed by the Queen of Navarre in one of her Tales, would have proceeded, if women had not struck out the idea of claiming protection from the Sword, in accordance with the elementary principles of Chivalry they imposed upon all good Knights.

Pathelins, chicquanous, justiciards (Law-mongers, fettifoggers, justicers), — such were some of the names country-women gave formerly to the men of the long robe, in days before magistrates had learned to be pleasant and courteous, — satirical writers with

(1) In the VIth. Century, at the Council of Mâcon, a Priest was for proving that women formed no part of the human species· The Assembly voted on this thesis; and woman owed it only to a very slender majority that she was not declared to hold a place mid-way between man and beast. Gregory of Tours.

At another Council, a speaker thus defined woman in general : « Woman is the gate of Hell, the pathway of iniquity, the scorpion's bite, a noxious species (*femina janua diaboli, via iniquitatis, scorpionis percussio, nocivum genus*) » Quoted by M. Paul Lacroix (le bibliophile Jacob).

Alphabet de l'imperfection et malice des femmes (Alphabet of the Imperfection and Evilness of Women), by Jacques Olivier, 1617.

a grievance, like Jacques Oliviér (1); preachers seeking success and notoriety by broad sermons; men like the brothers Étienne (2), repulsed by the wives of laymen; moralists in whom compulsory continence has produced a morbid irritation of brain, prosecutors, hard-faced judges, all inveigh with unseemly violence and foul words against luxury, dancing, exposing the bosom, love itself, rail at courtesans, persecute and torture tender criminals, burn witches, flagellate devotees, and have female sinners beaten with rods, — all so contrary to the law dictated by the gentle wisdom of the Hindoos, « Had she a thousand faults, never strike a woman, not so much as with a flower. »

Impossible to enumerate all the grievances of women against that whole class of long-robed mora-

(1) *Le tableau des piperies des femmes mondaines* (Delineation of the Trickeries of Wordly Women), where are shown in several histories related the tricks and artifices they employ (1632). — This curious work is by Jacques Olivier, the terrible foe of the fair sex, author of the *Alphabet de l'imperfection et malice des femmes* (Alphabet of Feminine Imperfection and Evil-doing).

(2) *Remontrance aux dames sur leurs ornements dissolus* (Remonstrance addressed to Ladies on their Dissolute Apparel), by Brother Antoine-Étienne, Minorite, 1585.

Fra Bernardino da Feltro had preached the preceding year at Brescia, and had caused to be publicly burned on the Great Square those *dead locks* which all women put in all fashions on their heads, and which they are in the habit of wearing in order to increase their native beauty. Other vain feminine ornaments likewise he had burned. — « Bandello, Xth. Part, IIIrd, *Novella*.

lists whom their cloth embitters. The man of the black or of any other coloured gown (Monks will be treated of later on) has never had, since Abelard and Heloïse, any but very equivocal successes in gallantry, successes but occasional and merely of the senses. « I have known ladies who would on occasion prefer to good fish-soup a rich, coarse bacon soup, — which their vitiated taste esteemed a dainty. »

The paramount merit of men of the robe in the eyes of women was this ; they showed themselves not hard to please where plain or passées women were concerned. Yet in spite of this excellent trait, wind-falls for the Gown, with its stern seriousness forming such a contrast to the gay successes of the light-hearted Sword, hardly ever occurred except with recluses or ardent persons of low rank, with women bent on blackmail, ill-balanced matrons or erotic old-maids. Only the most important and richest of the gloomy and dissolute crew were now and again admitted to surreptitious favours by noble ladies in the superfluity of their naughtiness, or by wealthy citizens' wives and suchlike hypocritical and sham-pious dames. Of these there were always some who wished to taste, as Tartuffe proposed, of « love without scandal and pleasure without risk, » the keeping up of appearances being according to Ignatius Loyola in the very first rank of virtues.

The last named holy man brings us to speak of the Monks, the constant objects of ridicule on the part of their fellows of the gown, the men of letters, a mean-

spirited and jealous folk in strict accord with the spirit of their cloth.

The monks, those free-lances of an enforced chastity, fully recognizing the disabilities of the religious habit as contrasted with the happy licence of the Sword, writing the while their « Champion des dames », their « Blason des Folles Amours » (The Ladies' Champion, Heraldry of Gallant Intrigue) and a particularly filthy work on *the remedy of sinfulness* (1), disguise as far as may be the shape and appearance of the plain habit they wear. To follow the words of sundry Fathers of the Church, first of all they draw in their robe tight at the hips and even in other localities, then with well-polished shoes (2) and gloves, « they have the look of merry-andrews more than of monks. » At any rate such was the complaint in the year 972 of Raoul, Abbot of Saint-Rémi. Later on, — and the custom was to continue in vogue as

(1) *La Somme des péchés et le Remède d'iceux* (The Summary of Sins and the Remedy of the same), printed at Lyons by Charles Pesnot, about 1584, 4to. A book of filthiness composed by Jean Benedicti, a Franciscan of Brittany.

(2) Some monks of the Middle Ages displayed these ridiculous affectations even in their foot-gear. Their shoes, made much too small, were adorned with a long point and two ears, and always coated with the most shiny polish, which special servants were charged with the duty of renewing constantly. — *Réforme du Primat, ou Synode du Mont Notre-Dame*, by Richer, II, p. 39.

« The *Capitularies* of Charlemagne allowed monks to wear gloves ». — Ménage. *Étymologies de la langue française*, Ghent.

late as 1780 for Court abbés, they wear the sword (1), and this mainly to please the ladies. « This is done, » Matthew Paris assures us, « by very amiable prelates and even by the inferior clergy. » Some of the latter used to fight duels and understood the management of the broad-sword, the weapon which was so dexterously wielded by Brother Bernard de Montgaillard (2)

(1) In a Novella by an unknown author, appended to the the Decameron of Boccaccio by the Giunti and Aldi, we find mentioned as quite a usual habit on the part of a monk towards the end of the XVth. Century, that of wearing a sword : «.... *E primisegli nella scarcella e tolse una spada ed usci fuori* . » (And he put them back in his purse, and took a sword and went out. »

Straparola (in his *Nuits facétieuses*. — Comic Nights, 13th. Night. Tale XI.), relating how a Curé, going at night to visit a woman, disguises himself as a swordsman, says, « Next comes up a young man bearing in his right hand a sword and in his left a round buckler..... This young warrior, who was no other than the Curé of the village, who was her lover and kept her as his mistress, quitting sword and buckler, ran forward to kiss and greet her. ».

(2) Brother Bernard de Montgaillard, nicknamed *the Little Feuillant* (Monk of the order of St. Bernard), was a skilful fencer with the broadsword; on the occasion of the procession, or *show-Sunday*, of the « Leaguers » which took place at Paris on Sunday, June 3rd 1590, he made himself conspicuous by his swordsman's tricks.

« He it was, « says M. de Thou, « who animated this mascarade, showing off his broadsword play, now at the head, now at the rear, of the monkish infantry. » — Notes to p. 50, of Vol. I. — L'Estoile. *Journal de Henri IV.*

« It was on the Bridge of Notre-Dame that the Legate reviewed, on June 3rd. 1590, the famous procession of the

a man of rank and a member of the famous « League ». It was a priest, « who was a master of the craft », that instructed the Baron des Guerres, in view of his duel with the Sieur de Fandilles, to use a half-sword, as Brantôme, always precise in details, relates (1).

« League ». This ecclesiastical infantry, composed of Capuchins, Carmelites, Franciscans, Reformed Franciscans, Jacobins and Feuillants, all with gown tucked up and hood lowered, helmet on head, hauberk on back, dagger by side and gun on shoulder, defiled past four abreast, having at the head the Bishop of Senlis, and for Sergeant-Majors the Curés of Saint-Jacques-la-Boucherie and Saint-Cosme. Some of these men-at-arms, forgetting their guns were loaded with ball, and wishing to salute the Legate, killed one of his Almoners at his side. His Eminence finding the review rather warm, promptly gave his blessing and retired.». — *Almanach du Voyageur à Paris* (Diary of a Traveller at Paris), 1783.

(1) Brantôme. *Discours sur les duels* (Treatise on Duels).

CHAPTER VI

The Man of letters.— Wit and Science, fatal foes of simple Happiness.

From Roman times then, the Gown has been the distinctive garb of magistrates, as well as of the learned or industrious citizen, this class always representing merely gravity and tiresome solemnity in the eyes of women.

The fair rebels, once under the gallant and open-handed protection of the Sword, defied sumptuary edicts one and all. As for reprimands, these were simply thrown away, contempt for everything in the way of remonstrance being a prerogative of the sex.

Water nymphs, says the legend, threw stones at the deacon Hiltibold, who had just installed a holy hermit in their neighbourhood; and the wife of the stern Ange Pandolfini (1) used to paint outrageously at the very time her learned husband was composing his uncompromising treatise « On the Due Governance of the Family. »

By its pedantic morality and silly, simple-minded affectations of superiority, that gave it the sorriest mien, and even more by its inveterate habit of petty

(1) Ange Pandolfini. *Treatise on the Due Governance of the Family.* XIVth. Cent.

worrying, the Gown provoked many domestic ills, women being more often than not in search of a matrimonial grievance to excuse their avenging themselves by some act of unfaithfulness. Such misunderstandings the Sword was always able to turn to its own advantage with the envious-hearted matrons of the Gown, who in accordance with decrees they could not elude were expressly forbidden (1) the luxurious appointments of noble-born wantons.

Such is a brief summary of the reasons for the ill

(1) Wives of lawyers and citizens in general were not allowed to wear dresses of velvet or silk « like dames and demoiselles of high estate ».—LEBER, *Pièces relatives à l'Histoire de France*. (Extracts relating to the History of France.)

« This multiplicity of sumptuary laws inspires Vertot to make the following observations couched in terms singularly harsh towards the female sex: It may be seen how the greater part of this enormous number of edicts that have been promulgated against luxury, have had as their main object to repress that of women, and that *their* vanity and emulation have been the principal cause of the immense expenditure that was the ruin at once of individuals and the State. To exibit this in detail would carry me too far, especially in a treatise that is already only too long; I will merely add that the fault in question is not peculiar to the ladies of France. It is found no less widely extended in all epochs and in all countries, such extravagance having always been a fault of the sex which, filled with vanity, seeks in its endeavours to please men to find in extrinsic ornaments the graces nature has often refused it. » (*Dissertation de l'établissement des lois somptuaires parmi les Français*. — Dissertation on the Establishment of Sumptuary Laws in France; collections of the *Académie des Inscriptions*, May 1760.)

success in former days of the men of the long robe strictly so called. As for men of the pen, writers of all sorts and poets, who not belonging to the *noblesse* must consequently count among *gownsmen*, they were but ill suited to the humour of the ladies, who pretty nearly all prefer a captivating boldness of address and amiable violence. The fact is they were far too unenterprising, far too stiff and awkward, too self-distrustful and self-restrained, « forgetful of how a man must demean himself with suchlike bold, merry, stout-hearted dames, well-knit and stalwart. They represented that feeling of respect which in conjunction with virtue creates fair beings to inspire their books or sonnets, herein resembling Don Quixote, who preferred to go on thinking the vizor of his helmet was sound to trying whether it actually were so. « After all, the most clear-sighted women could not well help saying amongst themselves, — what good do we get out of the triumphs of their wit or their science, « fatal foes of simple happiness » ? What good do we get out of their fame ? it is merely a rival to our attractions. Petrarch refused to wed Laura (1). A fine part truly, to be the mistress of Dante or the helpmeet of Galileo; to have nothing better than suchlike visionaries to deceive !! Dreamers, so ridiculous in the married state, had many faults ; they were too

(1) Petrarch refused to marry Laura. — Chateaubriand. *English Literature*, vol. I.

The Pope offered to secularize Petrarch, that he might be able to marry Laura. Petrarch replied to this proposition of his Holiness : « I have yet many sonnets to make. »

much given to star-gazing, and above all they were far too chary in getting killed, — so thought the fickle sex. There has been, so Ménage affirms (1), in modern times but one single poet killed in battle, and that was only by a stone; and « the Muses », as Buchanan puts it, « are virgins because they are poor ». Poverty was always, in the eyes of women, the greatest fault of all in men of genius and dealers in intellectual wares.

Apollo, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Molière, and, we may even say, the majority of the Immortals of the bay-leaf crown, — « the bays have thorns men wot not of », — each and all of them loved a woman who played them false. « How many perjuries to make one faithful wife ? » exclaims Shakespeare. Ovid forsaken by Corinna in favour of a Roman captain returned from the Asiatic wars, complains of seeing women prefer brawny soldiers, well stocked with plunder, to less well provided rhymesters. For these last, as for so many others of the famous dead, who have never really lived, is left in all the realm of love but a very restricted space, as narrow as is their celebrated burial place in Westminster Abbey, the *Poets' Corner*.

After such a list of deceptions and disappointments undergone by men of the gown, no need to add that

(1) « I know not among the moderns, » says Ménage, « any other poets slain in war but Garcilasso, restorer of Spanish poetry. He was killed in Provence by a stone, in the time of Charles V. » *Menagiana*.

the Sword likewise, which did escape ridicule, did *not* altogether escape disasters in its love affairs. Odin, Caesar, King Arthur (1), the noble Jehan de Saintré and the Maréchal de Richelieu, are in legend, history, romance and memoirs respectively, representatives of the countless brotherhood of the « encornaillés » (horned gentry), to employ the generic surname Molière consecrated to their use. The name continued applicable from century to century, as may be readily verified, to the vast majority of great men (2), — not to speak of others. Still in spite of all this, we must repeat, all successes in gallantry were primarily on the side of the Sword.

The creatures of the robe, jealous victims of deceit, « cruel, murderous and suspicious », proceeded to their vengeance slowly but surely, by sly and underhand ways, affording their wives cause to scorn them under every aspect.

As a consequence of this contemptuous feeling, some contracted a « recklessness of thought and compliancy of spirit, before yielding to the fatal lapse ». On the contrary, noble dames who were according

(1) « Arthur, according to the *Triades galloises*, perished obscurely in 542, in a domestic war against his nephew Medrawd (Modred), who had seduced his wife Gwenhyfar (Guinevere). » — Note by M. J. Buchon in his edition of *Froissart's Chronicles*, Vol. I.

(2) The list of great men deceived in love is considerable. The most cursory mental review will show that the majority of great men of the Sword, Laurel or Gown have been deceived by their mistresses or their wives.

their favours to two or more gallants at once found an indescribable stimulant in applyingtheir love wiles in this particular way. For the bolder spirits it had a kind of glamour of successful deceit and vigilance baffled, that kept them to the mark. Besides this, — and here was the exciting part, — the sword hung ever suspended over their heads. Punishment on the husband's part being summary and immediate, there was real courage and a sort of heroism, and a whole gamut of thrilling emotion into the bargain, in deceit practised at the risk of one's life, « running more hazards and perils than does a soldier in the wars ». For truly, what can be more perilous than to brave the watchful suspiciousness of « an armed cuckold? » as old Brantôme has it. « Injured husbands occasionally killed their wives in open Court ».

The first part of the *Dames Galantes* treats amongst other things of murders due to jealousy. These were terrible, particularly in the Southern countries of Europe, which copying Eastern customs, had set up a kind of code of revenge, adopting as a guiding principle a *point of honour* that was held more sacred than life itself. In Southern lands, the especial home of jealous passion, where lovers and husbands were wont to lock up their mistresses and wives, there was no security for prowling lovers because of them. « So soon as night falls, » writes Aarsens de Sommerdyck (1), in 1655 describing Spanish life, « no man

(1) *Relation de l'Etat d'Espagne* (Account of the Condition of Spain), continuation of the *Voyage d'Espagne* (Journey in Spain), by Aarsens de Sommerdyck.

goes abroad, because of nocturnal gallantries, in Madrid or elsewhere, without coat of mail and *broquet*, » — that is a round buckler.

As late as the XVIIth. Century the Sword was no plaything, we see, where female falsity was involved. Even in France, where complaisant husbands are sometimes very accommodating, *vulsenades* (1) were common ; such was the name given to the killing of a wife taken in the act of adultery. As to suspected lovers, they were usually treated as follows, and the possibility threw a poetic light over their amorous visits, « The Seigneur d'Allègre, who had got off (at the assaults on Yssoire) with an arquebus shot in the thigh, was soon after killed at night through a lady of the country, whom he was paying court to » (2). « Some husbands there are », says Brantôme, « who kill the lady and her cavalier both together. « Thus in *his* day, as in a thousand such cases, jealousy cleared the fields and streets with pistol balls, and had scarcely anything to fear from justice.

In spite of these dreadful possibilities, the Sword differing so widely as it does from the Gown in virtue of its prestige, its trappings all glittering with gold, and its other allurements, « gathers all the fairest

(1) « Vulsenade, murder of a woman surprised in adultery by her husband, who kills her on the spot. » — Lacombe. *Dictionary of old French.*

« For a *vulsenade* or murder of an adulterous woman by the husband, the Capitulary laws held it enough to deprive him of his arms. »

(2) Pierre de l'Estoile. *Journal*, May 28., 1577.

blossoms of the garden », to use an old polite phrase of gallantry, For the gilded rapiers, for the bold spirits women and fortune smile on, are reserved the glance of challenging eyes, the provocative wiles, so full of good-will and ill thoughts.

Triumphant riders prancing through the breach, then later famous and high-born rufflers, ever stirred the dreams of maidens by night and by day. « The man that seeks their love », says a dirge of Eric Blodoxy, « must be undaunted amid the crash of arms. »

The most enticing blades have in all ages provoked susceptible hearts among so-called virtuous wives, who yet love to do wrong in thought, to commit an unfaithfulness of the fancy, an adultery of the imagination, — the abortive and unavowed bigamy so well delineated by Saint-Evrémond (1).

The fact is women would only consent to be compromised, and as we should express it nowadays dishonoured, by the Sword, which is the very essence of audacious enterprise and makes all offences forgiven, including its peremptory and unconventional caresses. This was originally, it would appear, — before the authorities had invented the demure *rosière*, — a principle very generally adopted by the mass of women. Indeed the feudal *droit de Seigneur* (2)

(1) Saint-Evrémond. *Œuvres meslées* (Miscellaneous Works), Paris 1668.

(2) The *Droit du Seigneur* (Right of the Feudal Lord). As to this curious custom we will quote a document of 1588, « Right over the houses of the Village of Aas ».

« *Item*, when any women of the above named houses shall

(right of the feudal lord), formerly known as « poaching », was so far from being displeasing to newly married wives that during a period of several centuries not a single Lucretia was ever found. In those days, when folk saw a pretty woman in an interesting condition, they would say, « The Lord has passed this way », as if to thank Heaven for it. The plain ones scorned by the great man on their marriage day, merely paid their tithe tearfully at the Château. « There are girls, » says Brantôme, « who do not

come to marry, the husbands before knowing their wives shall be held bound to offer them for the first night to the aforesaid Seigneur de Louvie to do with them at his good pleasure, or otherwise they shall pay him a tribute ».

Item, if they come to have any child, they are held bound to bring a certain sum of deniers, and if it happen that it be a male child, it is free, because that it may be begotten of the efforts of the aforesaid Seigneur de Louvie the first night of *his above mentioned pleasures.* »

In a second document taken from the *enumeration* of the Seigneur de Bizanos, of the 12th. September, 1674, we read :

« *Item*, in past times the said subjects were in such subjection that the predecessors of the said enumerator had the right every time and always that they took a wife in marriage, to lie with the bride on the night next following the wedding. This duty has however been converted by his aforesaid predecessors into the payment of an impost in kind ». — Henri Martin. *History of France*, Appendix vol. V.

« A parcel of ground is granted to René and his descendants on condition that the younger daughter shall be held bound to pay satisfaction to the Seigneur,— « under honourable circumstances and in a private chamber ». — Charter of the XVth. Century in the French « *Archives Nationales* ».

readily give themselves to any but the Seigneurs ».

The maids of Brescia whom Bayard so chivalrously respected were doubtless deeply humiliated by the incident. This act, of scrupulosity dates 1512. About 1650, « The Prince, who was returning drunk from Saint-Cloud, encountering pretty Mme d'Esquevilly (1), whose coach had just broken down, and finding her much to his taste, took her and led her into the wood ; his courtiers each provided himself with one of the charmers who accompanied her. » With due variation of scenery and actors, such an escapade is representative of every period, and no doubt womens' high jinks with men of rank in former days is at the bottom of many hereditary hatreds. Here again we find woman spells discord. « 'Zounds ! among you, you men of the sword, you have all the fine things of this world, while among us, poor gallants, we have nothing at all. » These are the words of a *bourgeois* of the xvth. Century (2).

In gallantry, as in processions where church-bells and blaring trumpets and salvoes of artillery saluted it, the Sword myrtle-wreathed, the Sword that so gaily fronts every peril and wins every heart, everywhere marched first as of proper right. Everywhere it played its lion's part with a jovial self-assertion, spiting with its splendour, its gallant mien and broad shoulders

(1) Tallemant des Réaux. *Historiettes*, — Mme de Champré, vol. IV.

(2) Letter of release of the year 1415. *Trésor des Chartes* (Collection of Charters), n° 281.

the *Cedant arma togae* (let arms give place to the gown) of Cicero (1), himself a creature of the gown, who once had the ambition to play the General

To the Gown's old pretensions to first place a catch quoted by Tallemant des Réaux seems to give a ringing answer after all the intervening years :

Que vous estes à craindre,
Messieurs les plumets !
Que vous estes à plaindre,
Messieurs du Palais !
Si tost que la noblesse
Vient et fend la presse,
Malgré que vous payez,
Jamais vous ne dansez (2).

Just because of its incontestable prëeminence the Sword was always an object of hatred to the Gown, rendered jealous and ill-natured by women, the everlasting source of discord and greed. So much was this the case that « Councillors are to be seen quit-

(1) A verse Cicero composed in his own praise, in memory of his Consulship.

Cedant arma togae, concedat laurea linguae !

« Let arms give place to the gown, the laurel to the tongue. »

In other words, let military power represented by the sword make way for civil power represented by the toga. This latter was at Rome what we call amongst ourselves the *bourgeois* costume.

(2) (How ye are to be feared, gentlemen of the red coat ! How ye are to be pitied, gentlemen) of the Courts ! Soon as ever the nobles come and cleave the press, albeit ye pay the shot, never do ye dance.)

ting the gown and cap and starting out to trail the sword » (1).

Nevertheless, sworn foes as were the men of the Gown to the brilliant daring and haughty elegance of the Sword, they yet contributed something, in virtue of their official panegyrics extorted by political expediency, to its glory and even to its triumphs. Religious differences often found their solution by its help, and the Popes, who bore it as one of the chief symbols of their power, would despatch as a mark of deference to famous captains a blade they had blessed. The monastic orders again were constantly indebted to it, and used to celebrate its victories by depositing it on their high altars (2), absolving its crimes and granting its heroes stately obsequies. Jurists terming themselves *doctors in duelling* published its laws and its uncodified points of honour ; while historians and orators recorded and extolled its prowess, and poets ever officious in its service,— and their name was legion, — wrote sonnets they devoted to the use of love-sick soldiers who could not spell. Desportes in 1570 earned at this trade with the Duc d'Anjou an income of better than thirty thousand livres (3).

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(1) Brantôme. *Vies des Grands Capitaines* (Lives of Great Captains), M. de Tavannes.

(2) « In our days (XIII th. Century) aspirants to the profession of arms take the sword from off the Altar. » Pierre de Blois.

Previously to the Roman conquest, the Priests were accustomed to arm the Saxon warriors.

(3) The Duc d'Anjou « employed the Muse of Desportes

To complete the contrast indicated, picture alongside the Gown with its sorry demeanour the arrogant swagger of a gentleman at the beginning of the XVIth. Century. He made a point, says Brantôme, who declares for the supremacy of the Sword, of speaking gallantly, « now laying his hand on the pommel of his weapon, now to his side as if to draw his dagger. At one time he would step out bravely, at another stand in a haughty attitude, his cap one moment pressed on his head, then thrown up with plume erect, now to one side, anon tilted to the front, anon to the back. Presently he would let his cloak slip half off, as if he would twist it round his arm and draw his Sword. »

In a word, all the different causes enumerated above resulted in the Gown, in its longdrawn contest with the Sword, meeting as a rule from women with little but such mortifications as may be readily surmised.

On the one side, for the « noble artificers of war », this motto: *True love and doughty service;* on the other, for the men of the Gown, this phrase to characterize their attitude: *Business first of all.* Each must play his own part. Cæsar punished his soldiers simply by addressing them as *citizens.*

to tell his love to Renée de Rioux (the Fair Lady of Châteauneuf), and this traffic in gallantry brought the poet in thirty thousand livres a year. »

Tallemant des Réaux says of M. de Montmorency : « He was brave, rich, gallant and generous, danced well, rode well, and had always in his pay men of letters, who made verses for him. » — Tallemant des Réaux, II.

A very ancient popular song reveals the fact that, feeling themselves sufficiently guarded by the Sword, the real article that is, — protectress of law and commerce, — the *bourgeois* levies, on duty or manning the walls, used regularly to quit their posts, « to go lovemaking or to their beds ». (1)

At this, as at all other periods, we see nothing was easier than to be brave, nay ! even reckless, — using other people's courage! I forget who it was said, « They are always the same sort of folk who get themselves killed. »

Such were some of the types of character presented by the Gown, — all of which naturally turned to the profit of the Sword in its love enterprises.

(1) Qui ac genta molher, vai i burdir,
Et el qui ac s'amia, vai i dormir.

That is to say, the citizen levies, on military duty or guarding the walls, used to quit their post to go love-making or to go to sleep. — Song of the XVth. Century, *Bibl. des Chartes* (Library of Charters) 3rd. Series, vol, II., 110, 65.

THIRD PART

Love and War : Collective Effects on Society of the Mutual Action and Reaction of Women and the Sword. —Four Periods of Progressive Degeneration, — of the Knight, the Gallant, the Cavalier, and the Man of Pleasure.

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Love and War: Collective Effects on Society of the Mutual Action and Reaction of Women and the Sword. — Four Periods of Progressive Degeneration, — of the Knight, the Gallant, the Cavalier, and the Man of Pleasure.

CHAPTER I

The Age of Chivalry. — Parliaments of women; Fair Ladies and their Favours.

The earlier part of the present work has discussed the influence which the Sword exercised in primitive time over women, and inversely that which women exerted over the Sword. It now remains to set out in a general synoptic view the collective effects of this reciprocal action and counteraction on the old-time aspect of the European world.

Women, always as Montaigne observes, « wielding great power over men », — once more I emphasize this primary truth, — have ever from age to age determined under its different characters the bearing and typical aspect of the Sword. These different char-

acters may, subsequently to heroic times, be classified according to four distinct periods, those namely of the Knight, the Gallant, the Cavalier, and the Man of Pleasure, respectively.

Any examination of the successive epochs at which the general decadence came about must in the nature of things be supplemented by some sort of archaeological study of the outward ostensible transformations which love underwent.

We took in the first place as starting point the iron age, — iron and the loadstone having been held representative of Mars and Venus in the mysteries of the tender goddess. Now however, arrived at the last section of our subject, it behoves us in the interests of clearness not to go quite so far back into the past. The age of revival having given the warrior fresh vigour and woman a second maidenhood, it will suffice for our purpose if we begin our summary and final review of all the circumstances with those centuries in which we find the Sword in its pure devotion exalted and enlightened by the supremest chastity, in other words the Centuries of nascent Chivalry.

From the lily's heart, symbol of woman in her highest purity, had emanated sundry simple-hearted beliefs. The Virgin claimed this trusting faith, and lo! Saint Deïcola (1) without a shadow of hesitation hung his cloak on a sunbeam.

(1) Saint Deïcola, see *Bollandist Lives of the Saints*, vol. II. p. 202.

These beliefs, this boundless credulity, it was which six centuries later determined the form taken by the Chivalric ideal in love and religion.

Before the ecstasies of Christanity the martial spirit of the Ancient world grew obsolete; accordingly military enthusiasm became metaphysical, then sentimental, then presently devoted itself out and out to the service of woman, once again erected into a Divinity.

The legendary prowess of St. George (1) delivering a King's daughter is a presage of the new character of warlike love championing the fair, which animated the heroic periods of the Middle Age. «'Tis the gateway and threshold as it were of all high hopes», and Religion personified under a woman's form displays before the soldiers of God an ideal of perfect womanhood they must needs fall on their knees and worship.

Starting then from this point, the point at which this ideal reached its highest flight, and citing as we go undisputed facts in their due chronological sequence, we propose to trace its rapid decline and eventual fall, a fall which involved the simultaneous degradation of the Sword.

Thus we find the warrior regenerated, his sword of truest steel forming with its cross-hilt an emblem of faith, and woman at the same time emancipated from her so-called original sin. Under these novel condit-

(1) Jacobus de Voragine. *Legenda Sanctorum,* 1482, known as the Legenda Aurea, — The Golden Legend.

ions love is destined to blossom forth, purified of every stain, and provoke all ecstasies of respect and adoration. Thus the epoch of Chivalry and knightly honour shapes itself, with its long succession of mystical Sir Galahads.

For a brief while a glimpse is half seen of a perfect world, actors and scenery alike above reproach. But it was of very short duration ; the ideals of purity and holiness which Christianity had set up, utilizing to this end the hysterical exaltation of women, — « women carefully instructed », St. Ambrose adds, — were not long kept up by the fair ladies of those days, while the instinctive promptings common to them all soon resuscitated the sensuality of the Ancient world. This relapse of morals is strikingly betrayed in mediaeval times in those extravagant and exacting tasks of love that fair ladies laid upon men of the Sword, bending so submissively to their imperious will.

Taking as starting point the first commencement of chivalrous or ideal love, we must pursue our enquiry into women's life and habits of life during and after its full development in the XIIth. Century. For without their active participation no social movement is possible or indeed conceivable.

And first of all this main fact must be clearly grasped, viz. that it is from this new power which women had acquired that proceed by an obvious course of evolution the gradually perfected laws of Chivalry. The proof lies in their general drift and tenour, corresponding exactly as they do in spirit with the

rules formulated and discussed in the « tribunals and parliaments of gentle bearing. " In these Courts would all the choicest ladies of the land hold forth on knotty points, degrees of offence and « cases of love », regulating the subjection of the Sword and to this end granting graduated tax of their tenderest favours, « above and beyond the free giving of the mouth and the hands » (1). It is to be noted that these favours in accordance with the formulated rules could be legitimately conceded for the end proposed every one, up to and including the very last but one. After this penultimate self-surrender known as the « petite joie », or *minor gratification* (2) nothing else was left but the final « solacement of Venus »; and the fair ladies of rank reserved nothing of their persons intact — « except the rest ». In such complaisant wise did sensuality gently attemper idealism under the deceptive guise of the most transparent virtue.

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(1) In the Rules of Love, as formulated in the days of Chivalry, rules dictated by the ladies, we find they had admitted the practice of granting as an incitement to their knights the freedom of mouth and hands.

(2) « Petite oye », or petite joie (minor gratification), — favour of ladies: « All favours this side of the last and final ». — Ménage, *Etymologies of the French Language*, under « Petite Oye ».

« The title *petite oie* is given, in shameful traffic, to such criminal liberties as a man takes with a woman, when they do not extend to the last excess; the familiarities and smaller favours a man may obtain from a woman, when he cannot have the last and final. » — Trévoux, *General Dictionary of the French Language*, under *Oie*.

Suchlike carnal concessions once admitted in the politics of sentiment, the strangest complications followed. For instance, in certain cases, the lady mistresses of the Castle « would not have been able to sleep, till they had equipped with one of their serving-women the couch of the Knight enjoying the hospitality of their demesne (1). Further commentary is needless.

Spite of these drawbacks to a high morality, all questions of honourable bearing were under the general sanction of female authority. The latter made no attempt at concealment, but boldly exhibited its pretensions and claims in such terms as these:

« All valiant and true knights shall honour the ladies, shall not suffer to hear them evil spoken of; for of them, after God (so adds the original formula), comes the honour which men win. » Whosoever doth outrage them, shall be declared recreant by the voice of a herald-at arms (2). Somewhat later it was decreed at the sittings of the Provençal Courts of Chivalry to this effect: « The duty of a Knight is to please us, to make us happy in all good ways, and *to be discreet.* » This last recommendation is not very discreet itself, and opens a door to a good many suppos-

(1) « A Lady who welcomes a Knight in her house cannot go to sleep without sending him one of her women to keep him company ». — *Fabliaux*, MSS. du Roi, no. 7715, fol. 210 verso, col. I.

(2) Cornelius Agrippa. *Paradoxe sur l'incertitude, vanité et abus des sciences* (Paradox concerning the Uncertainty, Vanity and Abuse of the Sciences), 1582, Paris, Jean Durand.

itions. In Germany, landgravines and dames of rank were accustomed, as sovereign ladies, to be courteously disrobed and put to bed by their lovers (1); after this, common politeness bound the latter to retinence.

Their system of absolutism, based by women on the power of their carnal attractions, allowed their caprice to far outrun the limits of the possible. A fair lady, — even an unknown one, — could, among other extravagant behests, despatch an admirer otherwise unoccupied to go bring her a mantle fringed with « the beards of nine conquered kings » (2). Such and suchlike extravagances were admitted by the principles of Chivalry, « an institution sane enough at its origin, but run mad before its end. »

On studying the usages of Chivalry, we find first, of all that the feats of arms and *emprises* of the old Paladins, actions stimulated by some waving *favour* (3),

(1) Dr Johannes Scherr. *Society and Manners in Germany*, Ist. Part, ch. V. : *Chivalry at Court.*

(2) In the *Chevalier aux ij espées* (Knight with the two Swords), a MS. preserved in the National Library of France, a lady requires of King Ris to give her a mantle fringed with the beards of nine conquered kings, and hemmed with the beard of King Arthur who was yet to conquer. The mantle was to have « the tassel likewise of his beard ».

(3) *Frauengünste*, or woman's *favour*.

« When the Knights of past ages used to travel through foreign kingdoms to prove their valour, they were wont to carry some favour of their mistresses, to wit scarfs, bracelets, ribbons, muffs, girdles, plumes and diamond ornaments, and other gawds, the which they would give them and them-

such for instance as a garment of the loved one (1), show the same character of enthusiasm as that origi-

selves fasten on some conspicuous part of their person. These gracious presents they called *emprises of love*, wishing to give it to be understood that their chief aim and enterprise, or *emprise*, was to fight bravely for the love of those ladies who had given them these precious pledges and stimulants of honour. » — V. de la Colombière. *Théâtre d'honneur et de la chevalerie* (Theatre of Honour and Chivalry), vol. I.

« To carry the *favours* of ladies, men fix them hanging from the crest down over the shoulders, on the left arm or on the leg. » — Gio-Battista Gaiani, *Arte di maneggiar la spada a piedi et a cavello* (Art of managing the Sword on Foot and on Horse), Loano 1619.

Olivier de la Marche, describing a gage of battle which was made at the court of Burgundy in 1445, speaks of the favours given by the ladies. He says, Bk. I, of his *Memoirs*, ch. XIV., that « the Knight who had taken up this gage bore for *emprise* a lady's wristband, made of a flying flounce very gaily embroidered, and had the said *emprise* fastened on his left arm, to a knot of black and blue.» — Sainte-Palaye. *Mémoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie*, (Memoirs on Ancient Chivalry), vol. 1.

« The surcoat of Arthus was woven of the hair of his mistress which the latter, as she broidered it, had mingled with the silk. » — Reiffenberg. *Phil. Mouskés*, Introd. p. CIX.

(1) « On her side the lady, well instructed, went to her wardrobe and took a *chanise* (that is to say a shift) which she gave to the most trusty of her squires, bidding him on his part carry it to one of those three knights whom she named to him: « Let him away at once to the Tourney, and if he is willing to live and die in my service, » she said to him, « as he has promised me, let him don this *chanise*

nated by St. Theresa, that is to say, all the fanatic fervour of a passion-fraught and disordered brain that is firmly persuaded it has a sacred mission te perform. Besides, love had its ordered discipline: « And when mass was sung, » says and old document, « presently many fair ladies came up to see and to look upon such as are fain to devote all their very soul to love ».

At such epochs of candid illusion, when Romantic literature « wanders forth and fights in the delightful world of faërie », war ballads are transformed into love-lorn laments. Henceforward a new degeneration of military valour declares itself more and more markedly, while simultaneously and for the second time women seize upon and dominate the soldier's spirit. We shall see directly what this line of conduct brought the Sword to in days subsequent to the triumphant success of their united efforts in the politics of idealized love.

While to please their ladies the simple-minded fire-eaters, the collar of their servitude round their necks, go forth as Knights errant to pick quarrel anywhere and everywhere with passers-by, the noble beings they idolize behave in such ways as these :

In their feudal homes, where idleness was for ever whispering ill advice, the hours are all too slow in

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by way of cuirasse ». — Sainte-Palaye. Literal translation of an old piece of French verse entitled : *Des trois chevaliers et de la chanise* (Of the three Knights and the Shift). Thurin MS., no. G. I, 19.

rolling by, while the insipid monotony of life with a husband, whom out of sheer caprice they will persuade to hold travellers to ransom or rob them outright, or even to coin false money, eats out their hearts. Eager for excitement and pleasure, they long for fresh distractions; they crave to overleap the cramping bounds of habit, to taste unknown joys, above all to have room and freedom. Wearied of idle hours before their mirror, — still too small to reflect them from head to foot, — their imagination is already a-dreaming of the licence (that will before long be a reality) of Palaces, of Courts and gallant Courtiers, of gay visits and merry plays in the theatres of country Castles. Women are bored : the world is soon to be transformed afresh.

Then it is that tormented by desire of change, they have read to them, long before the date when they have learned to read themselves, the poems, the licentious romances, presently the obscenities of the « Tales of the Gay Science ». These productions, specially written to please them, under their eyes and it may almost be said to their dictation, degraded little by little the pure, fanatic love of the golden age of Chivalry.

In the days of its highest fervour, whilst strangely enough obscene figures intruded among the paintings and decorative carvings of Cathedrals and Abbeys, women make common cause with the monks, pursuing unavowed and unavowable ends of their own. Both are desirous, under pretence of religious enthusiasm, of ridding themselves of the troublesome,

jealous claims of the idle Sword, of the straitlaced and domineering knights who had married and ennobled them, and to send off on foreign service « that multitude of warriors out of work » (1), whose exuberant vigour must be turned into some, if possible, wise and useful, channel. Such were, albeit the old, conventional views of the schools say otherwise, the veritable motives of the earliest Crusades.

Here again as always, women gave the starting push to the social revolution, for with them insignificant causes sometimes had important effects. The defeat of Pompey the Great at Pharsalia was due to the fact that in the battle in question the Cavalry of his army consisted of young nobles, whose vanity made them fearful, as Caesar had foreseen would be the case, of wounds in the face. The defeat of the French at Courtray arose from the circumstance that the City Fathers of Bruges would not pay the extravagant expenses in dress incurred by the citizens in order to play the dandy before the ladies. A woman destroyed the Bastille, Michelet declares; and lo ! again only yesterday Court-ladies (2) imperilled the

(1) « That multitude of unemployed warriors that abundance of a feudal force, whose only practice was found in preying on itself, all this hurried the Christian peoples into more than one great conquest. » — Villemin. *Mélanges historiques* (Historical Miscellanies).

(2) According to a communication contributed to the *XIXe Siècle* from Salonica, the young Bulgarian girl who was the cause of the serious events that happened in that town, shook the Ottoman Empire and indirectly occasioned

ancient Ottoman Empire and the general peace of Europe.

The inner policy of the ladies somewhere about half way through the Middle Ages may be summed up in few words : « Let us be », they say to all simple and gallant knights : « away with you, and win us in the far lands of the Dawn precious stuffs, titles, fortune, girdles of gold work, — things we every one of us crave. » And lo ! the nobility of Europe on the road. Verily what woman wills, God wills !

Free at last. They are virtually widows, and intoxicated with the sense of freedom. Scorning to be like

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the death of Abdul-Aziz, would seem to have been anything but an interesting personality.

With regard to the part of agitators and revolutionaries played by women in the social organism, two passages from the *Figaro* (11 May 1878) may be quoted :

« The female sex played an important rôle in this plot against the peace of Russia and of Europe. — General Ignatieff, we are assured, was powerfully assisted at Court by the influence of his aunt, Mme Malzow, and by the Countess Antoinette Bloudoff... »

« The Emperor Alexander, it would appear, does not attempt to hide his irritation. At a friendly evening given by the Empress, the Czar having come in and the Countess Bloudoff having asked him if there were any news, his Majesty answered : « What have you to do with it ? Leave men to take care of the government ; if women had not interfered so much in politics, we should not have this *cursed* war on our hands ! »

The Emperor Napoleon I. used to say : « Women must be nothing at my Court ; they will hate me, but I shall have quiet. » — Mme de Rémusat. *Letters*.

ordinary Christians, they adopt fancy names such as Rostangue, Phanette, Yolande, Yseult, or Blanche Fleur (1). They proceed, what with "the never ending giving of love-tokens », what with « the kind bestowal of loving guerdon », to take complete possession by way of the senses of the rising generation, which is left in their sole discretion to teach and educate. Merely as a pleasing distraction they set to work to *form* shy young noblemen and half grown pages. By the gentle compulsion of their freely given caresses that provoke a precocious fondness to too frequent familiarities, do they ruin the rising generation and from childhood pervert the whole class of gentlemen. « Impudent as a page" is the phrase the women of 1730 will cry at some boyish liberty, quite proud of the result of their work of corruption steadily pursued for so many hundreds of years.

Other striplings, having become Squires on probation at fourteen (2) and expert far beyond their

(1) Stephanette, Alalete, Hermyssende, Mabille, Rostangue, Bertrane and Jausserande are fond, fancy names borne by some of the ladies mentioned by André le Chapelain. — *Manuscript on the Courts of Love in the XIIth Century.*

(2) « In the condition of Esquire, to which youths were usually raised at the age of fourteen years, on ceasing to be pages, the young pupils came into closer contact with the persons of their lords and ladies, and were admitted with more confidence and familiarity into their friendship, etc." — Sainte-Palaye. *Mémoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie* (Memoirs as on to Ancient Chivalry), vol. I.

years in love matters, spread still further abroad the new fashioned ways of love and dalliance.

These are revealed in all their details in the old Romances and Metrical Tales, and inevitably led to the physical degradation of the Knightly class and the decay of all respectful belief and trust in women.

Adopting the new mode of life consequent upon emancipation, — for does not « new love drive out the old » ? — they gave themselves up heart and soul to pleasure, and leaving nothing more to be asked for, accorded liberally to each aspirant the payment for his devotion. Already, as they sit weaving « crowns of greenery », « the while some French minstrel skilled in the craft of words, recited in their ears lays, virelays and other minstrelsies . . they quite forgot the absent, whether lovers or husbands, who lay languishing in captivity at Mansourah or elsewhere in Saracen lands, waiting their long deferred ransom with sighs and tears, as Joinville describes it.

Not one of them, should a ghost come back one day from Palestine, will die of joy, like Ulysses' faithful hound !

The first Crusade, « conceived without any true object or reason that could be avowed », was as we have just pointed out, the result of occult and hidden exciting causes, in which women took a large share. Solely as having contributed to bring about these wars in far off lands, where the debauched lives of the noble combatants showed how little religion

had really to do with it (1), they are primarily responsible for the decay of Chivalry and its ideals of sentiment. In very truth, the hero adventurers of the expeditions to Palestine, their wits sharpened and their infatuation cured by distant travel, ended by buying concubines and slave-women in the bazaars of Asia, and eventually brought back from the East a fierce love of luxury and with it the most shameful of the vices of Antiquity. Abominations of this sort, the same which undid the Knights Templars, was at a later date divulged in the language of the Law Courts at the trial of Gilles de Rays (2). Let us pass lightly over such shameful subjects, and return at once to the home life of the ladies who dwelt in feudal Castles.

During the long absences of husbands or of respectful, devoted swains, in other words of tiresome bores, what did the fair ladies left behind do for amuse-

(1) Saint Louis lamented the fact that even quite close to his own tent the pick of his chivalry had established places of prostitution. Joinville tells us of the complaints of the King who could not succeed in suppressing these hotbeds of debauchery. On this subject may be consulted the account given by M. Fleury, p. 379 of his *Mœurs des Chrétiens* (Manners and Customs of the Christians), of all the disorders which prevailed in the armies of the Crusades in Joinvilles days.

(2) Trial of Gilles de Laval, better known under the name of Gilles de Rays. — Documents preserved in the National Library of France (antique collections), nº 8357. Extract published by P. L. Jacob. *Procès célèbres* (Famous Trials), Paris, 1858.

ment? To supplement their domestic enjoyments. and coming as a pleasing diversion from without, may be named the visits of Trouvères and Troubadours, a class that does not figure largely in the Holy Wars. Along with other minstrels, they had right « to free entry, victual and lodging », — all which they paid for in songs. These poets who sing of love in suggestive couplets, these Bohemians of a fighting age, these parasites and flatterers (1). at times men-

(1) « In a general way, the greater or less renown a lady enjoyed depended on the more or less of praise she received from the Troubadours and the greater or less celebrity of the said minstrels. The lady who was best besung was likewise the best served in love.

« These venal singers had the right of entry into all places; their meed was food and lodging, and they paid their debt in songs. »

An English edict of the XIVth. Century prescribes certain limitations.

« Edward, by the Grace of God, etc... to the Sheriffs, greeting.

Whereas many idle persons, under colour of professing themselves to be *minstrels*, have been and are received to drink and eat in the houses of other men, and are not content to depart without presents from the masters of the houses; wishing to repress these disorderly proceedings and this idleness, we have ordained that no one shall so intrude himself, to drink and eat, into houses of Prelates Earls and Barons, without being a minstrel, etc.; it shall be forbidden that more than three or four at most come there the same day. And as regards houses of lesser quality, none shall be suffered to enter therein without being bidden; and they which shall be so bidden, shall be bound to content them-

daciously professing themselves makers of armorial mottoes or composers of tombstone epitaphs, formed an agreeable distraction when admitted into the townships, Castles or Strongholds of the country side, to which the ladies invited them that they might contribute their free-spoken quips and cranks to the talk and day-dreams of summer evenings.

Formidable as their vindictive satires, which they hawked about from town to town and Castle to Castle, the fair coquettes took care to wheedle them by many an unstinted concession of their favours. In this way they earned public panegyrics for themselves, directing at the same time the Jongleur's biting couplets against their rivals.

Easy to picture, judging by modern notions, what an attraction and what a satisfaction to their vanity the liveliest and prettiest dames must have found in such public advertisement of their charms, in such attacks and such vengeance wreaked on their neighbours.

In such wise as a rule did the *gentilfames* (ladies of family) spend their leisure, the while their husbands and lovers were fighting or dying of the Plague in Palestine.

The profound importance, under old-time social conditions, of this line of behaviour on the part of women is not difficult to apprehend.

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selves with drink and meat, without making any further demand, and if they offend against this ordinance, they shall forfeit the rank of minstrels. » — Abbé DE LA RUE, *Essai histor. sur les bardes, les jongleurs*, etc. (Historical Essay concerning the Bards, Jongleurs, etc.)

CHAPTER II

Chivalric Ideal modified by Oriental Passion and Romance. — Tourneys and Feats of Arms

In addition to the evidence already adduced, many other proofs exist to demonstrate the fact that from its first origin which is based upon the Christian Gospels, the whole character and form of Chivalry was in essence subordinated to the authority of women.

In obedience to their caprice, always captivated by curious novelties, Chivalry which they moulded to their will, assimilated to itself in some degree the spirit and in some instances the practices of extra-European Peoples.

Already in Classical times, the Greeks and later on the Romans had borrowed largely at the instigation at once of courtesans and of honourable matrons, from the customs, the luxury and the sensuality of Eastern nations.

Under a like influence the Gauls, and subsequently the Germans also, adopted various usages coming originally from the same source and disseminated abroad by the Roman conquest.

Finally in the Middle Ages, simultaneously with irruptions of the Saracens into the West and above

all with the settlement of the Arabs and Moors in Spain, was displayed in the South of Europe, from whence it was reflected widely over the North, a fresh infatuation on the part of womankind for the Romantic modes and fancies of the passionate Orient.

From this source it was that the swaggering Chivalry of the South, long before it was mimicked in « chilly » Teutonic lands (1), borrowed under the influence of some burning but clandestine passion its exalted ardour and impassioned phrases. Hence the famous war-cry : — « God and Fair Ladies ! » — a sort of profession of faith, which the Spaniards, half Arabs as they are, have simplified into this other motto : *Dar vida por su dama* ; « To give one's life for one's Lady fair : »

From the Arabs again came the fashion of public displays of prowess and elaborate spectacles in the open air, diversions the Sword consecrated in old days to the pleasuring of noble dames and demoiselles wearied with the sameness of their lives.

The hawking parties where they loved to fly their

(1) « It would be a useless task to seek in this institution (Chivalry) any trace of German origin. No doubt cavalry existed in Germany from the XIth. Century onwards, and every individual in a condition to equip himself at his own cost could follow the army as a Ritter ; but there was nothing in common between this custom of war and the manners and customs of Chivalry. The latter really arose in the South of France and in Spain. » — Dr Johannes Scherr, *Society and Manners in Germany*. (French translation by Tissot.)

falcons, the tourneys where on great occasions they might be seen stripping themselves garment by garment to their *camise* (shift) (1) in their wild enthusiasm, the assaults at arms, the single-stick bouts, the jousts and last of all the « tiltings at the ring », were nothing but a complicated imitation on this side the Pyrenees of the Mussulman *fantasias*, then in full vogue at Seville and Granada.

To complete the argument, it should be noted that in proportion as these knightly diversions and competitions of arms grew more numerous, more and more did the Platonic character tend to disappear in love, as modified by its fair and noble practitioners.

Already about 1300 the latter were ready to grant, without restriction or scruple, to such champions as

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(1) We read in *Perceforest*, vol. I., fol 155, verso, col. I. how at the end of a Tourney, « the ladies were so stripped bare of their attire that the greater part were all but naked, for they departed thence, their locks lying over their shoulders more yellow than fine gold : and beside only their coats without sleeves ; for they had given everything to the knights to bedeck them withal, wimples and hoods, cloaks and shifts, sleeves and bodices. But when they did see themselves in such case, they were as it were one and all ashamed ; but so soon as they did see that each and every was in the like case, they did all set to laugh at their adventure ; for that they had given away their jewels and their very clothes with such good heart to the knights, that they did never note their stripping bare and divestment of the same. » — Sainte Pelaye. *Mémoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie* (Memoirs concerning ancient Chivalry), vol. I, notes, 2nd part.

served their vanity to good effect all privileges of the *merry life*, for as Bacon says, «dangers are fain to be paid in pleasures. »

Hugue Brunet, one of the earliest Troubadours, laments this change in the manners of his day, « I have seen the time, » he says, « when a lace, a ring, a glove, was payment enough to a lover for the signs and tokens, the protestations and declarations, of fondness of a whole long year. To-day it is straightway question of granting him all and everything..... In those happy days that are no more, lovers were fain rather to hope for the supreme and final bliss than to win it at once. » Such patience ended, as may be supposed, in tiring out that of the fair ones, and the discreet methods of these pure-souled Paladins underwent a speedy reformation at their hands. They were not long in teaching a lesson or two to suchlike noble-hearted but simple-minded heroes.

« Men valiant in arms, of gracious and loving mien, » to use Froissart's expressions, the heroes of the hour coveted by every female heart, the victors in Tourneys who had the right to choose out and proclaim before the envious crowd of rivals some one fair lady as Queen of Beauty, these expected to be well recompensed by her for their act of courtesy.

Once encouraged to hope, all aspired to the bliss of earning something more than the « petite joie », — a pretension allowed by the fair. And thus we find the poets they had attached to their service addressing the stoutest knights in stirring words such as these :

Servans d'amour, regardez doulcement,
Aux eschauffaux, Anges de Paradis :
Lors jousterez fort et joyeusement,
Et vous serez honnorez et chéris (1).

Servants of love, see, a right gentle sight, on the scaffolds, — raised seats, — Angels of Paradise : then joust, ye must well and merrily, and ye shall be honoured and comforted.)

With this aim in view, — to be *comforted* (the true inwardness of the phrase may be easily guessed), these jousters fenced before the *boards*, or spectators' seats. They dealt abroad and took in turn many a shrewd knock, posing the while as heroes before the more than half « fallen angels », who showed a decided tendency to fall yet further !

There can be no doubt about it that the emancipation of morals and development of sensual licence among the military class in the Middle Ages were due more than anything else to the good pleasure of the ladies. They it was and no one else who cut short the reign of sentimental mysticism, and set up the fashion of physical, material love instead.

The Knights of old were, whether by convention or through their own diffidence, or perhaps only in consequence of their tender fondness, far too humbly submissive to women's will to venture on the small-

(1) Verses composed for the Tourney of Saint-Denis, May 1389, by Eustache Deschamps, Ballade, fol. 140, c. 4, and 159, col. 2. — Sainte-Pelaye. *Mémoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie*, vol. I, notes, 2nd part.

These festivals finished up with orgies. — Ibidem, vol. II.

est act of initiative, where *their* pleasure, caprice or authority were involved. Such a thing was not to be dreamt of according to the ideas of those days.

To please the sex and win their favour was the constant preoccupation of the Sword. In all matters, from the Germans Tacitus describes onwards, this sentiment, this ideal, is predominant, still further growing in intensity during the ages of Chivalry.

In those days, should a town be besieged, defenders and assailants would as a matter of course send each other challenges on days of truce, and in mere wantonness of emulation break lances in honour of the ladies, encouraged from the walls by the presence of stout and gallant dames looking anything but famished by the rigours of the siege (1). These were the heart and soul for the defence no less than the bait and stimulant of the attack ; and every man did his best to win or to defend them.

To set free three hundred ladies beleaguered and imperilled at the Market of Meaux, on June 9. 1358, Froissart relates (2), the Comte de Foix, the Captal

(1) « At that spot was engaged a skirmish very close and very perilous. The combat was fought in a place well chosen for such men as were fain to distinguish themselves in arms for love of their ladies, for all the dames and demoiselles of Pontevedra looked on from the top the rampart of the town. » — Gutierre Diaz De Games. *The Victorial : Chronicle of Don Pedro Nino, etc*, 1379-1459. French Translation by the Comte de Circourt.

(2) Gaston, Comte de Foix, known by the surname of Phoebus, returning from the Crusade of Prussia along with the Captal (Governor) de Buch, their whole following con-

(Governor) de Buch and the Duc d'Orleans, having with them as following sixty lances or so all told, « slew and put to an end » that day more than seven thousand « Jacques » (insurgent peasants) out of a total of nine thousand who had sallied out from Paris and the neighbourhood.

This feat of arms, a perfectly authentic one by-the-bye, is by itself enough to prove the devotion of the Sword to women (1), as well as the vast superiority

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sisting of only forty lances, attacked and dispersed 7000 of the « Jacques » (insurgent peasants) at the Market of Meaux : where had taken refuge 300 women whom the « Jacques » wished to lay hands on. « When these mischievous folk, » Froissart says, who reports the whole affair, « saw them thus orderly drawn up (the horsemen that is to say), albeit they were in exceeding small odds against themselves, they were in no way so hardy and eager as before; but the first ranks began to fall back, and the gentlemen to pursue after them. » They killed thousands of them. — FROISSART, *Chronicles*, vol. I. ch. xlvii, year 1358.

(1) In contrast with this undoubted fact we may mention an incident characteristic of modern times.

In 1848, Berlin had its insurrection; the city had to be retaken from the insurgents in the same way as Paris was recovered from the Communards in 1871.

« Before commencing hostilities, the insurgents despatched certain *parlementaires* to treat with General Wrangel. These informed the Commander-in-Chief of the attacking troops that at the first cannon-shot fired by him, they would hang his wife.

« The General's only answer was to open fire.

«As soon as he was enabled to enter the city, he turned to his aide de camp and said to him :

« I am curious to know whether they've hung my good lady or no. »

it had over what was called the *foot-rabble*. It gives us a good idea of what the heroes of Chivalvry, albeit no longer in the enjoyment of their early primitive vigour, could even yet accomplish in the hope of a guerdon of caresses.

It was the age when the terrible steel brand, or war-sword, was still the chosen weapon in the heart of battles to give effect to the splendid frenzy of armed nobles. These same nobles, passionate by hereditary tradition, continued to bear the devices or favours of the grateful fair, but in their display there was now more of braggartry and sensual promptings than of the veritable ardour of true love.

Be this as it may, the man of war invariably turned his thoughts before a victory to the ladies, to the « beauteous charms, sweet glances and pleasant favours » which he hoped to enjoy when it was all over. When beaten, he was exercised above all else by imagining what mien he should wear on his reappearance before the charmers, to whom he loved to tell over « in ladies' bower » (1) his adventures and deeds of daring.

The Crusaders, on coming back from the Holy Land without the booty promised to these noble dames and gentlewomen, had recourse to an ingenious device with a view to exciting their pity and allaying their

(1) « Leave we this rabble (the Saracens) to bray as they please, and by the head of God we shall yet tell of this day in bower before the ladies. » — Michaud et Poujoulat. *Notice on Joinville*.

ill-humour at the disappointment. They kept all hanging in tatters over the back of their helmet the flowing veil they had fastened there as a protection against the sun of Palestine, — symbol of many a stubborn fight and many a hard day.

From this torn fragment, its dilapidated condition no doubt a trifle exaggerated in some cases, originates the « lambrequin » or mantling (1) that figured subsequently in the blazoning of arms. « Knights, at sight of the bright faces, velvet dancing eyes and gentle looks of the maids » who made advances and directed their provocative wiles towards them, had learned to be habitually preoccupied above all other concern with the idea of pleasing the ladies. This attitude once adopted, while it rendered the latter haughty and affected, led them at the same time to impose on their adoring swains many ludicrous fashions and proceedings. To give an example: « Moreover they had amongst them » — the envoys at the Court of the Count of Hainault, — Froissart relates, « many young knights-bachelor who had each of them one eye covered with a cloth patch, in such wise that they could not see out of it, « and this in fulfilment of a vow they had made for love of their ladies. » Such were the absurdities women often imposed upon chivalrous knights during the feudal wars and in the midst of the most grave civil embroilments !

(1) Cloth cut in points and scallops depending from the crest of the helmet and represented as descending over the shield.

Throughout Europe towards the end of the Middle Ages, the costume worn by the nobility of the Sword becomes grotesque, — again under feminine influence. Petrarch writes in one of his letters to Pope Urban V, in 1366, commenting on sundry habits of the day: « Gentlemen wear their hair plaited on the neck like some animal's tail, and drawn back on the forehead with ivory-headed pins. » Sacchetti, a few years later, criticized in his *Novelli* the Florentine nobles who from motives of vanity used to squeeze in their buttocks in hose many sizes too small for them. Suchlike fantastic extravagances, all aiming at one and the same end, the seduction of the fair sex, are to be found in all countries, — even in grave and solemn England. The fashionable world there would readily bestow its applause on anyone, man or woman, who was the first to invent a new *fad* or fashion ; while the nobility of the Sword, ruined by lavish entertainments, in other words by their devotion to women, scoured the highroads to plunder the merchants' trains and so get money for their mistresses. At the same time losses at play are already described as leading to « crime, disaster and disgrace ». In France, the land of light-hearted frivolity, great Lords were to be seen bargaining away their Castles and fiefs to Louis XI, to find wherewithal to lead a yet more festive life with their fair favourites. Such wild doings were no less rife among Squires than among Knights; and in a later day than theirs, gallants in their turn, both young and old, were just as madly infatuated.

There is no lack of evidence to demonstrate the ill effects produced by sentimental and by sensual excesses on the physical and moral powers of fighting men.

In every period the ways and habits of the Sword have first and foremost exhibited in the highest degree the irresistible influence of the female element; which according to one modern Physiologist is really and truly a negative element, a diminution, an enfeeblement of the masculine. Under this persistent influence the Sword in Europe, before the end of the ages of Chivalry, fell away more and more by slow but sure stages from the heroic type displayed by the grand figures of its early days.

Military costume, as known to history from Antiquity downwards, would by itself suffice to prove by the successive modifications and ridiculous fashions it underwent the fact that the dignity and character of the Sword were at all epochs subordinate to the caprices of women. First of all, in barbarous ages, it was stern and stiff in type, framed to « inspire terror » by its very look: already under Saint Louis, though he enjoined on his Knights the duty of a plain and honest simplicity, it had grown rich and splendid, while after his reign it made greater and ever greater concessions as time went on to the effeminate and merely ornamental. At the bidding of the sex whose sole preoccupation is the toilette, a soldier's dress became sumptuous, and after a while indecent, — so much so as to push into the background at first sight all idea of its real object. « Suits of mail made to run away in » is

the phrase made use of by the writer who continued Nangis' chronicle, speaking of the curtailed armour of the knights discomfited by the English at Crécy. The Chronicler of Saint-Denis again, and at a later date Monstrelet (1) and the Italian author Sachetti, have said in regard to costume every hard thing that could be said of the young men of their day.

« It is to the change in arms and armour we must look for the origin of many usages », Montesquieu declares in his « Esprit des Lois ». The Chivalry of the silver age, once *adjusted* (armed), all but invulnerable thanks to its shell of steel, its « full and complete mail », which at once concealed and fortified bodily defect and weakness, took no more heed to re-invigorate its energy, which women all the while found a wicked pleasure in breaking down.

This degeneration may be verified merely by a study carried out in any collection of weapons of war of the gradual diminution in size and weight of the old sword-blades, and of the rapiers in the last years of all. The fighting men of primitive epochs, who could give such terrible slashing blows, had at first grown continually bigger and bigger along with their swords, called at first « one-handed », presently becoming

(1) « Men took to the wearing of shorter doublets than they had done aforetime, in such wise that you could see plain the fashion of their backsides, etc, just the way you would dress up monkeys, — the which was a very unfortunate and very immodest thing. They wore likewise on their doublets huge epaulets to show how broad they were of the shoulders. » — Monstrelet. *Chronicles.*

swords « of a hand and a half ». Their immediate descendants waxed stronger and ever stronger by wielding the tremendous « two-handed broadsword », of an enormous size and weight. Froissart shows us how Archibald Douglas swung this gigantic weapon with deadly effect. Eventually comes a diminution and shrinkage of all this brawny vigour, and while blades are lengthened and get thinner and thinner and more and more spit-like, we meet all through the period of the « rufflers » and swaggerers of the Sword, both in France, Italy and Spain, with the short sword, or half-sword, the *mezza spada*, *media spada*.

As brute strength diminishes, quickness and scientific movements taking its place in fighting, sword-blades are more and more refined, grow more and more sharp and subtle, like the point of honour they defend to the death. Fence being now a matter of ruse and stratagem, the swordsman no longer requiring to be robust, makes agility his systematic study; while henceforward the fighter losing his old bearings aspires more than ever to be rid of the weight of his old-fashioned equipment. He takes Saint Drausin as his patron, who makes gallants invulnerable, and adopts for good and all the traitorous aid of arquebus and artillery. Simultaneously he strips himself of the different parts of mailed armour, rendered useless by the power of gun-powder. Eventually, clad simply in velvet or cloth, he exposes himself thus undefended in assaults and battles.

After these incidental remarks directed to show the

influence women had over « folk of the profession and calling of arms », let us return in the next chapter to the final days of Chivalry, that Chivalry of which they so blithely wrought out the decay and final extinction.

CHAPTER III

Decay of the Chivalric Ideal of Womanhood.

The point at which we now take up the discussion marks the epoch when woman is finally tired out of being taken as an ideal, — a thing comprehensible enough in itself, if we consider how the sex almost invariably possesses an instinct of coquetry that takes umbrage as it were at a too obtrusive and too persistent respect on our part. Accordingly they were not long in transforming metaphysical love into quite another sort, one altogether much more prompt and ready. This transference was followed so far as the Sword was concerned by consequences the most disastrous, of which the general character and aspect of the state of morals resulting from the change afford unmistakeable evidence.

As a result of the public licence allowed themselves by *gentilfames*, — orgies represented by the gay doings of Eleanore of Guyenne and later by those fêtes at Saint-Denis where the Queen of Sicily and Isabeau of Bavaria (1) met as comrades in licentious-

(1) « In 1339 Isabeau of Bavaria invited the Queen of Sicily, who had come to visit Paris, to make a pilgrimage to Saint-Denis. This fête, tournament of arms and festivities lasted three days, and finished up, so say the chronicles of

ness, the sympathies of the lower classes, so proud to begin with of their fair ladies and brave cavaliers, already show a tendency to desert the Sword ; while on the part of the latter the old respectful love towards women is notably enfeebled, — as was their own good pleasure it should be.

Whilst these latter are exposing themselves « with breasts all bare in public, and adressing their supplications to my lord Asmodeus, the alluring demon of luxurious living », high morality and good manners alike decay, and Messire Geoffrey La Tour Landry, who used to mark with chalk the doors of ladies of ill repute (1), is like the pure-souled Bayard, merely a

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the time, with a masquerade and nocturnal orgie during which the highest ladies, the Queen included, surrendered themselves to men whom they did not know. The Monk of Saint-Denis, after giving a description of this fête, adds: « Everyone strove to satisfy his passions thereat; and we have said all when we say there were husbands who profited by the wicked behaviour of their wives, and maids likewise who lost all heed for their honour. » — *History of Saint-Denis*, ch. VII.

« And it was matter of common report (it is a question of certain fêtes given under Charles VI), that the said jousts did end in disgraceful doings in matter of love intrigues, whereof many evils have since arisen. » — Juvenal des Ursins. *History of Charles VI.*

(1) The Chevalier Geoffrey La Tour Landry, a gentleman of Anjou, in a paper of instructions addressed to his daughters about the year 1370, mentions a knight who was accustomed to mark with white crosses and marks of infamy the door of mansions inhabited by ladies of doubtful morality.

The outspoken phraseology of the document mentioned

last, out of date survival of the old chivalric ideas.

From these days of decadence dates the common use of the finical word *gentilhomme* (gentleman, gentle man), an expression of purely feminine formation and type, which by degrees superseded as a designation of the man of the Sword the earlier title of *chevalier*, or knight. « And so », a document of 1490 informs us, « ladies nowadays say a *gentleman*, no longer a *knight*; speaking of their friend, they say *my servant.* » Thus does extinction overtake the old type of « valiant knights », whom Cervantes in his Don Quixote makes the butt and laughing-stock of light women and chambermaids. This famous Satire was written, as every one knows, to laugh out of existence the last vestige of Chivalry, already dead to all intents and purposes.

As early as the XVth. Century men had ceased to greet the fair with song. The warlike poetry of Germany, after first passing from the martial to the tender, from the *bardit* (ballad), or war-song pure and simple, to sentimental plaints and the *Frauendienst* or « service of ladies », of a sudden lost all its inspiration. Poetry turns to prose ; in fact it would seem as though simultaneously in all countries, even in those where love was most at home, the Sword grew conscious of the faults and artificialities of the fair sex. All symptoms point to the development of

gives a measure of the licence permitted in language supposed to be fit for women and practised with girls in this epoch, already deeply corrupt.

such a disillusionment, in presence of which the old-world cult of tender consideration for women disappears. Thus it is the old primitive sentiment of respect is replaced by a merely artificial affectation of deference, the basis of our modern school of manners.

In the age of the *fabliaux* of *Court Mantel* and *Le Comte Ory*, the first of a series of many such abominations, of the indecent *Nouvelles* of Louis XI's day, which represent the Sword as already perverted and corrupt, there is left no room any more for passionate enthusiasms, for the chaste love of noble Paladins for their high-born ladies fair. « My *lady* », was the phrase of early days », for in those times *mistress* was a word not in use », a word implying some one a man may do with as he pleases. Very soon woman, *semper eadem,* the « eternal feminine », fêted in *other* ways it is true but still fêted under all changes, wearies of the idolatrous homage of her humble worshippers, and more and more eager for untrammelled licence, comes down altogether from off her pedestal. What next? She dons a mask, exposing at the same time after the German mode her bosom more freely bared than ever, « the chest displayed to the very belly », to follow the expression of a preacher who lived in those happy days (1). « The mask hides all », as Brantôme puts it.

Out of pure gaiety of heart and high spirits did

(1) Olivier Maillard, Preacher to Louis XI. and Confessor to Charles VIII. He used to cry out in the pulpit, addressing the ladies of his congregation : « And you, young wenches, you, women of the Court, does this touch *you* ? »

women prepare and inspire the sensuous, and sensual, Renaissance, which in imitation of Antiquity, devoted its best energies to the extraction of a quintessence of pleasurable sensation from physical love. Thus did the Sword, new born to a new life, penetrated as it were by the effervescence of a new Springtide, set up a new cult of Venus consisting in a new and totally changed worship of the sex. In it there is no question of the ideal, simply and solely one of tangible, fleshly beauty cultivated with every refinement of care, further supplemented by the additional allurements of all the delights and all the elaborations of Asiatic luxury.

Women, roused by every stimulus of excitement and anticipation, and irresistible in their headlong impetuosity, carry the Sword along with them on a torrent of startling changes. Their claims to independence lead everywhere from South to North to a veritable revolution. Like their contemporary Columbus, they too divine a New World ; they welcome with a rain of flowers the dawning of a new era, and crown with wreaths of violets the conqueror of Italy (1), that « soft land of velvet, » where races were run in 1315 in which the competitors were courtesans (2).

(1) Charles VIII. arrives in Italy, and lo ! the poor man is driven half wild with the acclamations of his triumph : « Ladies crowned him with a garland of violets » and greeted him with kisses as the champion of their honour. — V. de la Colombière, *Théâtre d'honneur* (Theatre of Honour).

(2) « Castruccio Castracani, to humiliate the Florentines whom he has driven back into their town, gives under the

In France these fallen divinities had long shown themselves as patronesses of the licentious tales and provocative stories which the learned Étienne Pasquier calls « ladies' divertisement ». They had tolerated and indeed encouraged in all ways in their power, if not actually invented, all productions of the kind, adopting for their own use in the different dialects of love-making certain words of equivocal meaning, and out of these framing a sort of *argot* or « little language » of wanton living, a kind of polite *slang*. For this end they borrow from the most free-spoken writers of the licentious school they have created. At first they utilize the startlingly outspoken expressions of that scribbling lady Christina of Pisa ; then as time goes on, their naughty vocabulary is enriched by « pleasant lubricities » culled from the literature of their day, beginning with the *Roman de la rose*. Next in the series, to supply them with bad words and smart notions, come Villon's and Rabelais' full-flavoured improprieties, followed up by the smut of Brantôme, Abbot of *Brotheliande* and first favourite of gallant dames.

The perusal of the old Romances and lascivious Tales written specially for their gratification no longer sufficing to fill their leisure time, these wantons, well instructed in letters and « ill-tongued » in speech, will presently requisition for the « merry and gentle

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walls of Florence a race of courtesans among other amusements. » — Valery. *Curiosités et anecdoctes italiennes.* (Italian Curiosities and Anecdotes.)

« diversion of their elegant idleness the Dialogues of Aretino, or better still his illustrated works, « then so much in fashion. »

Beroaldus de Verville, Canon of Tours, has the effrontery to entitle his indecent work *Le Moyen de Parvenir*, or " The Right Way with Women. " In a word the tastes of the soldiers and women of the era are such as to take delight in inventing, applauding and patronizing obscenities of every sort, and freely displaying the grossest licence.

Already French women of high condition had incurred the unfavourable criticism of a comtemporary Poet. Under pretence of giving good advice, he recommends them not to go to Church dressed in such a way as to show some parts of the body naked ; not to swear, nor yet to get drunk , to be rid of the habit of lying and stealing ; to go to the offertory without giggling, and not to accept presents and jewelry except from a well-intentioned relative ; last of all not to allow men to put their hands into their gowns too loosely laced. . . . . .

Judging by these instructive counsels, we are justified in thinking the gentlewomen of those days, always only too delighted to wear alluring raiment and "loose attire", were not much better than "the light women who get their living by lightlying their bodies".

This dissoluteness of life, noted again and again by plenty of other writers as well, and serving to entrap the opposite sex with the bait of novel pleasures, is everywhere the same, only still more revolting in the North of Europe than in other parts, for there

we find husbands exhibiting a scandalous complaisance in favour of the Sword. When a nobleman, says Æneas Silvius, pays court to a citizen's wife in Germany, the latter's husband serves the gallant with drink and contrives so as to leave him alone with the fair one. In the same prudish land of *Landsknechts* and *Reiters*, while the lords are away from their Castles hunting or fighting, their wives, meantime drinking at every meal each of them « four or five quarts of beer », give themselves up to the coarsest pleasures. A preacher of the Fatherland exclaims on this subject :

« God keep all pious lads from suchlike women and girls who live only to dance a-nights, to the end they may be touched and kissed without shame ».

At Lübeck citizens' wives visit places of ill fame at night time, and there conduct themselves after the fashion of the Empress Messalina. In some other towns the professional prostitutes have the right of citizenship (1). Poggio in 1415 recounted the debaucheries and filthy usages practised in his day at Baden during the bathing season (2).

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(1) Dr Johannes Scherr. *Society and Manners in Germany.*

(2) If the two sexes mixed and gave themselves up to the most indecent proceedings at the baths of certain German towns, this was still more the case at the famous baths of Baden. « Poggio has given a description of these baths, where during the height of the season merchants and captains came from long distances to take free enjoyment of all kinds of debaucheries, eating and drinking in the bath on

In earlier times than these, the English monks wrote in 1348 : « Heaven hath even now sent the *Black Death* to punish women above all others for their indiscreet interference with men's diversions ». Later Matteo Palmieri expressed his indignation at seeing the flower of the ladies of Florence take delight in mimicking the prostitutes in their dress, fashions and ways (1). Later again, it is the terrible Plague of

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floating tables with naked women, and after that dancing with them to the accompaniment of instruments of music and singing ». — Dr Johannes Scherr. *Society and Manners in Germany.*

Captains, Statesmen, merchants, clerks, used to come thither from very great distances to enjoy all the refinements of debauch. In the morning the baths would present an animated scene ; those who were not bathing themselves looked on from an elevated gallery at the men and women in the bath, who would be eating and drinking from floating tables. Pretty girls would be going about asking them for an alms, and displaying alluring charms to tempt their appetite. After the midday rest, drinking went on again as much as the human stomach could endure, till the sound of the instruments gave the signal for dancing. » — Poggio, « *The Baths of Baden in 1417.* »

(1) « I have seen », wrote Palmieri about 1450, « I have seen in the city the dress and mien of prostitutes, once looked upon as dishonourable and shameless, presently adopted and imitated at their fêtes and festivals by the flower of the noble Florentine ladies. .... These ladies would bare their breasts and allow their gowns to fall even right below the bosom ». — Palmieri. *Vita civile* (Life of Cities). — Valery. *Curiosités et anecdotes italiennes* (Italian Curiosities and Anecdotes).

Holbein represents the German ladies of his Cen-

Naples which, if we are to believe the general testimony of contemporary accounts, soldiers caught from the Italian women and brought back with them to France, — yet another fatal gift of women to men of the Sword.

Everywhere, at Venice where noble maidens act as prostitutes, at Rome, where the Popes recall and formally re-instate the courtesans whom the ladies of condition were for supplanting, in Sicily, in Cyprus at Famagousta, where sixty thousand « filles de joie » are said to have plied their trade, in Turkey even, where the Odalisques are at that period accused of a form of love « infamous and abominable », in Spain where a native book *la Célestine* reveals the mysteries of Castilian immorality, are rife the same habits of debauchery. There were still to be found in Madrid, in Lope de Vega's time, more than thirty thousand prostitutes.

The above summary review may give some notion of the heights the sensual activity and carnal influence of women had arrived at in less than three centuries in the way of enfeebling under his hauberk of

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tury affecting to show the bosom perfectly bare.

« The women of Lombardy, where Galeasso Sforza was in power, had the reputation of being excessively dissolute ».

Paulus Jovius, in his book « Famous Men » wrote on this as follows : « The dissoluteness of life was so great at that time, above all among matrons and girls, that any other woman properly regardful of her chastity was held a fool and ill instructed in comparison with the well-mannered courtesans. » — Camerabius *Meditations*.

mail,[1] at a later day under his gilded armour, the knight and gentleman, whose honour and good faith are gradually lost as his vices grow and multiply.

Under such conditions then, without violent crisis or fierce death agony, did the good old Chivalry of heroic days disappear, to be succeeded in the social structure by a new and entirely different epoch, that of gallantry frank and free, with its «outspoken talk », to whose inspiration is due the institution of the Golden Fleece, purely amatory in its reputed origin (1).

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(1) « Many writers say it was simply because Philip fell in love with a common girl who wore a robe lined with lamb skin wool. Some declare this girl was red-haired and that « the Prince having gone to see her and having found on her dressing-table a tuft of red hairs, » he picked it carefully up and kept it as a precious thing, and that, his courtiers having made some mock of him for this, he conceived the idea of ennobling the said tuft of hair by instituting the Order of the Golden Fleece ». Misson. *Nouveau voyage d'Italie* (Second Italian Journey), 1691.

This last version seems to be the true one.

CHAPTER IV

The Age of Gallantry. — Attractions of Court life.

Women, as just shown, revolted after a time against the idolatrous worship of their humble adorers, and soon completely altered the mode of expressing their respect adopted by the tender sentiment of primitive Chivalry. Next in order for consideration comes the period of *gallantry*, an outcome of women's own activity, of the application of their own light-hearted spirits to the new modes of love initiated by them and followed by the Sword.

In the old diction of Castile, — subsequently however to the Cid, who was for killing Doña Chimène's doves to show his defiance and threatened to have her skirts cut short above her knees (1), — the word *Galanteria* (2), a word of Provençal origin and express-

(1) Chimène in the old ballads complains how the Cid kills her doves to defy her, and threatens to cut her skirts to an indecent height.

Que me cortara mis faldas
Por vergonzoso lugare.

(That he would cut my skirts to the shameful place).

Mérimée. *Mélanges Historiques et Littéraires* (Historical and Literary Miscellanies), Paris, Lévy, 1867.

(2) *Galanteria*. Galan, el que anda vestido de gala, y se

ing a Provençal idea, is defined thus : "*galanteria*, gallantry, gentle bearing, generosity, good heartedness, enthusiastic tenderness." It sums up in fact everything that is becoming and suitable to the Sword, according to the special tastes and good pleasure of ladies.

"A sword for a gallant", *para an galan*, is the phrase of an ordinance of Seville in 1526.

Gallant : "arrogant, dangerous fellow," according to Borel and Monet. "Galant," according to Menage's Dictionary, "is derived from *gala*, a word signifying joy, light-heartedness."

Thus employed and thus understood, gallantry marks the decay of disinterested admiration and the continued progress of sentiment towards sensual indulgence. "The last thing to be found in gallantry is love," is La Rochefoucauld's maxim. At a later date Montesquieu gives it as his opinion that the general wish on the part of men to please women was the origin of gallantry,

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precia de gentil hombre : y porque los enamorados de ordinario andan muy apuestos para aficionar a sus damas, ellas los llaman sus galanes ; y communmente dezimos : fulano es galan de tal dama. (*Gallantry*. A gallant, one who goes abroad dressed in parade costume and gives himself out for a gentleman : and inasmuch as lovers as a rule go very elegantly dressed to please their ladies, they call them their gallants and we commonly say : such an one is the gallant of such a lady). — Carolo Bovillio. *Galant*, that is joyful (laetus), gay, in dress and mien. — *Galanteria*, the same as gentility or gentle bearing, and so generous and courteous. To dress gaily, to play the gallant. — Cobarruvias. *Dictionary*, under word *Galan*.

which is not love at all, but rather a kind of delicate flattery, a subtle affectation, a systematic falsity (1). Taking these different definitions, dating as they do from different eras, as guides, some idea may be formed of old-word gallantry, as well as the general characteristics of a perfect gallant of the best period. With regard to the epithet *gallant* as applied to women, one which Brantôme in his Treatise on Fair Dames uses of the greatest and most *honourable* ladies of his day, — its inner, esoteric meaning and technical significance may be gathered from a Song, a medley of tears and smiles, composed by Marcelle de Castellane on the departure of her lover the Duc de Guise :

> Je m'imagine qu'il prendra
> Quelque nouvelle amante,
> Mais qu'il fasse ce qu'il voudra,
> *Je suis la plus galante ;*
> Mon cœur me dit qu'il reviendra,
> C'est ce qui me contente.

(I ween he will take some other mistress ; but let him do as he will, *I am the most gallant.* My heart

(1) The bonds that unite us with women originate in the happiness connected with the pleasures of the senses, the charm of loving and being loved, and likewise in the desire of pleasing them, seeing they are very enlightened judges as to a portion of the constituents of personal merit. Of this general desire to please is born gallantry, which is not love, but rather a kind of delicate flattery, a subtle affectation, a systematic falsity in love". Montesquieu. *De l'esprit des lois*, bk. XXVIII, ch. XXII,. Des mœurs relatives au combat, (Of Morality as related to Fighting and its Customs).

tells me he will return, and that thought it is contents me.)

It would not be easy without wounding delicacy, to give a more ample definition of *gallant* as applied to a lady.

The reign of gallantry in its highest perfection coïncides pretty exactly in its commencement with that of the XVth. Century, and ends simultaneoulsy with the XVIth. After 1400 there is no more any question among the Princes of Italy or the Dukes of Burgundy of love-making in « the old-fashioned coarse way », but only in consonance with rules formulated by the ladies. that is to say, « with all gentleness, and pretty ways and wanton wiles. »

This elegant mode, which no doubt in its first essays was still indeterminate and unfixed, soon acquired its characteristic and definite form « after King Francis the First of France, thinking to pursue love in all gallant gentleness, had to that end established his most excellent Court, frequented by such excellent and honourable Princesses, great dames and demoiselles, whom he freely availed himself of » (1). Hence-

(1) « King Francis loved *not wisely but too well.* For being young and free, indifferently did he fondle now one and now another, as insooth at that time he was not counted gallant who did not go wenching everywhere indiscriminately ; whereof he got the pox, which shortened his days. Indeed he died when hardly yet and old man ; for he was only fifty-three, which was nothing. Now the King, when he saw himself tormented and afflicted with this disease, was aware that if he did continue these vagabond loves, it would be still worse

forth, high-born women exert more than ever, thanks to the Sword and the admiration it inspires, a fatal influence over the whole social aggregate. Their *merry doings*, mimicked by the ranks below them, their dissolute life, their luxury and extravagant dress, corrupt the citizen class, then by contagion that of tradesfolk and artisans, for as an old proverb says, « the Court is the sure token of a people's habits »

The wise Montaigne said, speaking of sundry blameworthy practices of his day. " Our Kings are all powerful in such extreme reforms... The rest of France, — and he might very well have said, the whole of Europe, — takes its cue from the Court. " « Had it only been the ladies alone who were dissolute ! » observes an old historian and severe critic of his contemporaries ; « but the worst is the bad example they gave to other women, who were only too ready to mould themselves on their costume and affectations, on their dancing and ways of life... » (1).

A few words with regard to the prestige and delights in old days of the palaces of Kings, those

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for him ; and so, wise by experience, determined to follow love very gallantly. Wherefore for this end he did establish his excellent Court frequented by such excellent and honourable princesses, great dames and demoiselles, whom he did avail himself of only to make sure against unclean diseases and no more to soil his person with the filthiness of other days. Thus did he accommodate and satisfy himself with a love that was no wise foul, but gentle, clean and pure." — Brantôme, *Le Grand Roi Henri II.* (The Great King Henry II of France.)

(1) Varillas. *History of Henri III.*

cradles of gallantry. Think of all that is known of the best days of elegance and luxurious living, and then picture how potent an attraction the idea of dwelling with the *King* must have exercised over the mind of ladies whether of the greater or lesser nobility.

It used to be said in the XVIIIth. Century: « When far from Court, not only is one unhappy, but ridiculous into the bargain. » In the provinces, at the hearth of Castles and Manors, where old custom prescribed that the oldest present sat down to table only after having offered up a prayer to God by the mouth of a child, there was mighty little diversion for a woman. Amid this dull domesticity, this life so full of *ennui* and monotony, the day-dreams of young and pretty women, panting for gaiety and gay sights soared away inevitably towards the Court. *It* summed up all their longings, *it* possessed all the attraction of the unknown round which their fancy could play. « In such imaginings, » Marguerite de Valois used to say, is no innermost corner (of a woman's being) but is penetrated by some surreptitious, naughty spark of wanton desire. " From this same spark, be it noted, spring all the fantastic doings of gallantry.

It is quite sufficient to have read in the *Contes d'Eutrapel* of Noël du Fail, the exact description there given of a country nobleman's residence somewhere about 1530, to be quite able, without going back to more remote periods, to form an idea of the dreary monotony that in former days brooded over the mansions of the lords of the soil. These were ever haunt-

ted, for the demoiselles of the family and indeed for all ladies of birth who still retained their youth, by and unavowed and unavowable mournfulness like the dreary tortures of a bad dream. This arose from two causes, — there were the languors of April called up by the first fine days and the first appearance of the Springtide greenery, the colour specially symbolic of Priapus, and there were in the long winter evenings strange thoughts that came unbidden during readings of the *Roman de la Rose* or the *Decameron*, works that figured as a rule side by side on the shelves with the dust-covered Bible.

According to Mme. de Genlis, a woman's first requirement is to be in company, — a very venial fault, if only it had not led to so many evil consequences. Provincial *gentlewomen*, who had followed the magnet and taken up their abode at Court, no sooner found themselves « in brave attire, decked out with gawds, painted and washed, » than their delight was to compromise and corrupt, always from this love of being in company, King, Princes and nobles. A score or so of pretty women, smartly dressed, furbelowed and merry-hearted, were thus enough to debosh all the men of the highest rank who formed the Court world. Through them it is the word *courtesan* (Court-lady in its original acceptation) has got its disgraceful connotation; while everything goes to demonstrate the evil influence they had over Sovereigns, whom they invariably tended to set against men of solid merit.

« Small use in France, » said de Saulx-Tavannes,

« to know battles and assaults, if a man knows not the Court and the ladies. »

Royal grace and Royal favour were disposed of by the Court-ladies, who prescribed from that focus of wealth and luxury the fashions, bearing and modes of speech the ambitious nobility of the Sword were to adopt. The government and regulation of high life was in their hands.

Abundant evidence exists to reveal in what ways these lovers of perpetual change, after their open revolt against the apathy of Platonic love, after they had begun to feel the craving for a life of pleasure, set in motion the sensual instincts of gallantry and passion. Everybody knows how towards the end of the era of Chivalry, they shook the unwilling sentimentalist out of his lethargy, and constrained their admirers to gratify their desires by unseemly familiarities.

In England, Chateaubriand (1) relates, they had pastry baked in suggestive shapes served at table, while on the South side of the Channel the merry innovators were wont with quips and jest to drink on certain gala days from goblets ornamented with the most abominably indecent figures.

Taking advantage of suchlike encouragements, men of the Sword, their eyes once opened, monstrously abused in a spirit of swaggering emulation the merits they undoubtedly possessed as lovers. They display, nay! actually exaggerate, by way of additional seduction,

(1) Chateaubriand, *Essay on English Literature*, Introduction.

both in their sumptuous dress of everyday and in their war harness, a token or phallic emblem of the new shamelessness of life, — that obscene object the *braguette* or cod-piece (1), all beribboned in the German mode, and serving gallants of 1530 as a comfit-box. *Sic placet Veneri*, — « Such is Love's good pleasure ». Thus does tenderness grow entirely material, and women descend to a lower and lower level; while concurrently the noble weapon of fighters shrinks into the slender rapier, presently to grow lighter and ever lighter, to be bedizened with chasings and gold, to become smaller and slenderer in direct ratio with the loss of vigour on the part of the nobles.

Simultaneously with these changes in the sword, there is an increase in the numbers of Court ladies

(1) Louis Guyon, bk. LIV. ch. VI. of his *Diverses Leçons* (Miscellaneous Information), where he describes the fashions of French costume at that period, says : « The trunk hose were so closely fitted there was no means of making a pocket in them. But instead men used to wear a very large, thick *brayette* or cod-piece, that had two appendages at the two sides, which they fastened on with brooches, one on each side,and in the ample space there was between the said brooches, the shirt and the cod-piece, they used to put their handkerchiefs, an apple, an orange, or other fruits, or their purse; or else if they did not trouble to carry purses, they would put their money in a slit they made on the outside, near the head or point of the aforesaid cod-piece. And it was considered polite, when at table, to offer fruits that had been kept some time in this cod-piece, as to the present day some men offer fruits from their pocket. »

« How much the cod-piece is chief part of the harness among fighting folk. » — Rabelais. *Pantagruel*, ch. VIII.

— an institution originated and brought to perfection by the same gallant King of France who served as an example in such matters both to his successors and to the other Sovereigns of Europe. Then these ladies sell their favours to get wherewith to make a brave show and meet the expenses of their sumptuous toilettes, for above all things « it is needful, come what may, to make a figure in King's palaces ». On their side meantime the nobles of the Court, with a view to decoying and alluring the sex, make the most extravagant display in dress, grown *très gorgias*, — as the phrase went at the Louvre, even before the days when Catherine de Médicis trafficked there for political ends in the charms and naughtiness of her maids of honour. To gratify a Court-lady, Mlle de Montmorency, Henri IV, at the age of fifty-three tilted at the ring, wearing a perfumed lace collar and sleeves of China satin.

The preceding considerations will suffice to show how the official character, so to speak, assumed by love among men of the Sword depended absolutely on the caprice of women, always the arbiters of masculine fashion. It now behoves us to hark back once more in the course of our analysis, to pick up again the broken chronological thread.

The XVth. Century then was the period of all others when gallantry most flourished amid a brilliant confusion of glittering gold and bronze, velvet and flashing steel, amid art and songs and merry dances, amid fêtes and mascarades, where lips and kisses were but too ready to meet. Gallantry was the most marked and distinctive expression of the irre-

sistible collective activity of women and the Sword, — an activity that impressed on the men of those days an extraordinary vivacity and mobility of mind. War in Southern Europe, as for instance at the date of the Peloponnesian War, — declared at Aspasia's bidding, — has invariably been acccompanied by a stirring of the soul tending in the highest degree to the furtherance of the Arts. Later again, in Italy, the licence arrogated by the Sword and still more that of ladies and of courtesans, « who in Lombardy wear gowns of cloth of gold and look like fairies, » all tend to stimulate the merely carnal worship of women. This worship, as we know, exasperated the sour morality of contemporaries, and is represented on its intellectual and religious side by the gloomy and violent Savonarola, that sworn foe of false hair and love of dress.

Loving all forms of plastic and painted representation, everywhere, — in Palaces and even in the baths of Pope Julius II. (1) in the Vatican, Mythology (that

(1) The Baths of Julius II, are on the third story of the Vatican and are well nigh forgotten nowadays. This part of the building is bordered externally towards the court-yard by a hanging gallery formed of planks. The way to them is by broad staircases, the inclination of these being so gentle as to allow mules to bring the water up into the garrets of the Palace.

The room where his Holiness used to come to bathe is at most nine or ten feet long. It formed part a few years since of the lodgings of a Papal Chamberlain, and it was very difficult to gain admittance.

Lighted by a single arched window with gilded mouldings round it, the apartment is symmetrically decorated with

had re-appeared once more in Italy under Charlemagne) exhausts itself anew in lascivious images :

Et l'on revoit « le temps où les Nymphes lascives
Ondoyaient au soleil parmi les fleurs des eaux,
Et d'un éclat de rire agaçaient sur les rives
Les Faunes indolents couchés dans les roseaux. »

(And men once more behold « those days when the wanton Nymphs displayed their rounded shapes amid the water-lilies, and with bursts of gay laughter provoked the indolent Fauns as they lay reclined on the river banks amid the rushes.)

Artists imbued with the ruffling spirit of their day, like Leonello Spada, Benvenuto Cellini, or Caravaggio, take a heartfelt delight and pride in exalting in their works, copied after the Antique, the graceful beauty of the sex, so unfairly depreciated in the artistic productions of the Middle Age, when Germany went so far as to make even her *Liebfrau*. her « dear Virgin », unprepossessing. In this new era of form and beauty, the Madonna of the South, *Maria formosa*, Mary most beautiful, who it cannot fail to be observed tends to get younger and ever younger as represented in

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priceless paintings by Rafaelle, on a reddish ground. The subjects represent scenes of great licentiousness: satyrs, women and Fauns, Cupid teasing Venus, and in the foreground Apollo caressing a complaisant Nymph. These paintings, which are engraved in the works of the Artist, are in the main still in very good preservation. The three side walls, without windows, show each a small niche or recess in which no doub were put the perfumes and vases of scented waters

Art, loses her stiff, rigid look, grows graceful, even a trifle affected, and before long appears décolletée, while the Magdalen, the Madelon of later days, whence the Madelonnettes, pushes yet further a naturalness that is on the high road to indecency.

Titian, Giorgione and other favoured artists chosen to serve the « gilded youth of the Sword », portray absolutely naked, or to use the technical phrase, « paint in the nude, » high-bred courtesans of beauteous shape and red-gold hair, and even some *honourable ladies* under the same conditions. Bandello, Bishop of Agen, relates how a young Nobleman of Vicenza lost his wife outright at this game (1).

All these sensuous productions of the brush, exalting in striking contrast with the disfiguring Germanic realism, the grace and elegance of the nude female form, were nothing more nor less than so many suggestive advertisements to the advantage and profit of the fair sex. So alluring a state of affairs naturally stirred all sensual desires to fever heat, and determined that effervescence of gallantry which spread throughout Europe from South to North, and was so coarsely mimicked in lands beyond the Rhine.

German women were even more ready than in the preceding Century, in certain towns of the virtuous Fatherland, to display their charms scarcely veiled at all under transparent muslins, while ladies of title no less than citizens' wives used without a blush to bathe

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(1) Bandello. *Hist. Tragiques* (Tragic Histories), vol. II. No. XXXIV, p. 637 (French transl. by Chapuy).

at the public baths, promiscuously and in the costume of the Golden Age, along with « all sorts and conditions of men » (1).

In Flanders, in Touraine, the « fairest and most demure » of maidens, even daughters of noble houses, stirred by such examples, — modesty we must remember, according to Seneca's opinion, is not really of the feminine gender at all, — would sometimes figure undraped and as decorative accessories in the ceremonials attending triumphs of the Sword or in the gorgeous entertainments held under its auspices. It was so at Antwerp in 1520 on occasion of the visit of Charles the Fifth (2), later again at the entry of Henry II of France into Blois (3), or once again in 1577 at the Royal banquet of Plessis-lez-Tours, where « half-naked and with hair flowing loose, like brides », the most beautiful of the Court-ladies waited at table, we are told by Pierre de l'Estoile in his Journal (4).

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(1) Dr. Johannes Scherr. *Society and Manners in Germany.* With regard to the physical defects of German women in the XVth. Century, see a drawing by Albert Dürer (1496) preserved in the *Kunsthalle* of Bremen. It has been reproduced and lately published by M. Charles Ephrussi. Paris, Jouaust.

(2) At Antwerp, for the triumphal entry of the King, « the Gates were adorned with allegorical representations, young girls almost naked; I have rarely seen such beautiful women. » — Albert Dürer. *Journey in the Low Countries*, 1520-21. These young maidens, who had on only a transparent gauze, were the most beautiful girls in Antwerp.

(3) Henri Estienne. *Apology for Herodotus.*

(4) Pierre L'estoille. *Journal*, — year 1577.

Other banquets moreover of the same kind took place

No external authority would have ventured to forbid or even interfere with these lascivious diversions, which recall some festival of Anoumati, the Hindoo goddess of sexual licence. Such displays, where woman loved to expose all the entrancing beauties of her nature, were far too well protected by the brutalized Sword; and the most finished wantons could safely, braving the looks of the startled public and the reprimands of preachers, themselves corrupt, show off their beauty as much and as audaciously as they pleased. Thus was established under the auspices of high-born ladies, to the detriment of that same manly vigour they have done so much ever since to degrade, a new deification of woman as instrument of carnal love, under cover of the motto, so characteristic of the ruffling sentiment of those days, « Honni soit qui mal y pense » (2).

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about this time at Chenonceau. The general arrangements and scenery, which were highly indecent, were under the superintendance of the Queen Mother.

Women, whatever they may *say* about their modesty, always love in their fashions to expose their charms as much as possible.

(2) Motto of the Order of the Garter, created in 1350 by Edward III, of England, in honour of a garter of the Countess of Salisbury, which she had dropped while dancing and which the King had picked up. Some authoritues throw doubt on the story. — Antoine Furetière. *Dictionary*, — under word Jarretière (Garter).

CHAPTER V

Gallantry and Gallant literature, — Novelli and Tales of Manners. — Sapphism.

Fashion is almost invariably propagated from South to North, and the spread of gallantry forms no exception to the rule ; the hankering for carnal pleasure beginning in Southern lands, flooded all parts of Europe. From Spain, with its Arab and Moorish strains, it soon invaded France, where the indigenous frivolity of the French temperament melted into and made one with it, like Arethusa losing herself in the bosom of Alpheus. Simultaneously it made its appearance in Italy, and somewhat later in Hungary, where not a few Eastern habits were acclimatized ; while among our neighbours of the foggy North it was virtually unrecognizable under the tasteless travesty it there showed itself.

As to this new type of love, which with an ever growing audacity soon ventured on the coarsest phraseology, as to these new sensual modes copied from Antiquity, to meet women's wishes and satisfy the unanimous cravings of the five senses, Boccaccio, Sacchetti, Poggio, Giraldi, Centhio, Bandello, Rabelais, Falengo, Brantôme, — whose diction is that of the *honourable* ladies of his period, — and many another indiscreet, prying teller of naughty Tales,

are far and away more instructive than formal History, which is either pedantic and vague by convention and complacency, or else dumb by constraint. Not that *dumb* is precisely the right word, seeing that by Marmontel's calculation, it would require eight hundred years, and fourteen hours' work a day all the year round, to read all the volumes of History printed up to 1660 only.

In investigations of every kind details should be studied first, in order at a subsequent stage to elaborate the series of special observations made into a general survey of the subject. This is the only way to get good results. Tho light literature of manners, — *nouvelles*, memoirs and the like, is what provides by its indiscretions by far the most definite body of information available under the present head. Whether these frank revelations are found in the *Decameron*, the *Heptameron* or the *Astraea;* whether they are describing the preparations for a Tourney (1), or recounting the *delicate* adventures of anonymous heroes ; it

(1) Every here and there could be seen the ensigns flying above the towers, and palaces and fine houses decked out with pennons and banners of every kind of colour. Each knight has his pavilion and tents duly pitched, and busies himself in putting his harness into the best of order. All the streets are full of folk. Some there are preparing and fitting their arms; others getting their horses shod; others passing the time of day, laughing, singing and dancing. Nothing is heard but the noise of pipes and tabors everywhere; the very church-bells are not spared to make the day more merry with their ringing chimes. Night and day the gates of the town stand open, and there enter by

is there we must seek material for scrutinizing and judging the old-world life of gallantry, there exhibited unreservedly in the plain garb of truth, vices and deformities laid bare no less than good points and attractive features (1).

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the same a never ending stream of warlike bands. — Théophile Folengo. *Histoire maccaronique de Merlin Coccaie*, bk. I.

(1) Bandello has given (*Nouvelles*, vol. IV, 4th. part, no. 26) a description of the bed-chamber of a *gentildonna* of his time. Elegance of furniture counted for a great deal in the XVIth. Century in matters of gallantry.

« A very handsome young widow, taking advantage of carnival time, » he relates, « induces her foster-father to invite a handsome gentleman whom she has remarked and with whom she has fallen in love to visit her. The young man is received by the lady in her palace, magnificent with its priceless tapestries and carpets of Alexandria. He is introduced into the low-ceiled apartment serving as her bed-chamber ; the bed is adorned with curtains of marvellous rich workmanship and two fair pillows of purple silk admirably broidered with gold thread and delicately perfumed.

« On a little table in a silver candlestick burns a *torchetto*, a wax light of the whitest wax ; on the same table, which is covered with a silken cloth woven in divers colours and embroidered with silk and gold intermingled after the fashion of Alexandria, are ranged in order combs of ivory and ebony for combing the beard and hair, elegant caps, dressing-robes for throwing round the shoulders when dressing the hair, and dainty towels of the finest linen. In lieu of tapestry the room was hung with cloth of gold with velvet panels. In each panel were coats of arms belonging to the family of the late husband, and that of the widow, hers being hid under needlework hangings that they might remain

If the inner character of a People can be approximately gauged merely by their popular songs, or even simply by their demeanour, their quips and cranks, at moments of festivity, *a fortiori* may an opinion be formed of their life and habits from a perusal of the authentic and veracious writings of their story-tellers.

From the XIIIth. Century downwards, this literature of indiscretion divulges the inmost details of private life, in love and quarrel. Thanks to its delightful, outspoken tattle, and above all among the people of the South, (for indeed the North possesses in the way of *Nouvelles* hardly anything besides its *Gesammtabentheuer*, or « Century of German Tales ») we are familiar enough with the good and evil fortunes of the Sword, with the extravagancies of dress of the men who had their very horses scented (1), to go

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unknown. In charming vases of majolica had been provided the most exquisite confections and the precious wines of Montebriantino.

«... Before seeing the gentleman to bed, the bed is warmed by means of a *scaldaletto* (warming-pan) of silver; and finally, after having extinguished fire and candles, the lady who came with face concealed, gets into bed, putting her mask for the night till dawn break behind the pillow. »

(1) The following is a description of the gala dress of an Italian exquisite of about 1560:

He was of a handsome person and dressed with great richness; he changed his costume very often, finding all day long new fashions of embroidery, open lace-work and other gawds. His velvet caps bore now one medal, now another; I say nothing on the chapter of chains, rings, and

swaggering and prancing under the windows of their fair and fickle mistresses (1). This class of

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bracelets. The mounts he rode through the town, whether mule or jennet, Turk or hackney, were as clean as a new pin. The beast he was to ride out on was, under its rich trappings studded with hammered gold, always scented from head to foot, in such wise that the perfume of the compounds of musk, civet, amber and other precious essences could be smelt all along the street. Romano their perfumer used to say publicly that Messer Simpliciano brought him more gain in a week than any twenty other young noblemen of Milan afforded him in a whole year, always excepting however his Lordship Ambrogio Visconti, who was exceedingly lavish in his expenditure on perfumes.

Simpliciano might vie with the Portuguese dandy who every ten paces, whether he was on foot or on horseback, had his boots cleaned by an attendant. — Bandello, *Nouvelles*, 2nd. part, no. 47.

In the same *Nouvelle* Simpliciano dons, to go to an assignation, « a very white shirt of fine linen embroidered with gold and silk and highly scented, and perfumes himself from head to foot with a compound essence of civet, powdered amber and musk. » « He scented likewise his clothing partly with the before mentioned essences, partly with the *augelletti di Cipro* and other excellent powders, savoury and right costly."

For another rendez-vous, after donning a *giuppone* (robe) of *morello* (greyish violet) embroidered with gold cord, he took a *rotella* (small round buckler) and a sword.

(1) « Meantime a number of French gentlemen, lords and knights, never left off coming and going in this street, gazing at the ladies and making their horses curvet and prance. The horses were excellent, but badly ridden. The greater part of these horsemen were armed, and they rode down such persons as were in their road. » — Letter of Cas-

literature, and this only, depicts for us the finical affectations of the King's favourites, who « painted, combed, rainbow-hued, scented with aromatic powder, perfumed the streets, public places and houses they frequented » (1)... « accoutred with a silken vest without sleeves, their doublet of fine grenadine cloth edged with green and slashed at the elbows, close-fitting cap of red and hat on top of it, from which hangs a gay bouquet most daintily arranged » (2). Such the gallants, — in Italy, who enjoyed nocturnal assignations in low-browed vaulted halls where some fair *gentildonna* awaited them, intoxicated with love and longing and wearing at her bosom the anemone, Venus' flower, the flower of sighs, or perhaps a sprig of marjoram ; in Spain, the *embevicidos* (men drunk with love), who drank the wind their mistresses had breathed (3), who loved

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tiglione addressed from Milan, October 8. 1499 to Messer Jacopo Boschetto de Gonzague, his brother-in-law, in J. Dumesnil, *Histoire des amateurs italiens*.

(1) « Likewise they were used to bear on their accoutrements many powders, and on their clothes, their muffs, their handkerchiefs and collars, such things as musk and Cyprus essence, perfumes and many sachets of aromatic powders, Cyprus powder, as well as civet. » — Gratien du Pont, Sieur de Drusac. *Des controverses des sexes masculin et féminin* (Controversies of the Two Sexes, Male and Female), Paris, 1540.

(2) Noel du Fail. *Contes et Discours d'Eutrapel* (Tales and Discourses of Eutrapel).

(3) *Beber los vientos por ella* (to drink the winds for her) was a love phrase in Spain, meaning to be madly in love,

the *hablar à la reja* (love-talk at the barred window), moonlight serenades and duels, sinister adventures with jealous husbands, skirmishes with street braggarts and highway bandits and bravos; they were the stout-hearted soldiers who followed love and war with equal ardour, whose delight was in brawls with the watch and wrangles with the « Captain of the Night, » meetings of gallantry in Church, at Sermon, in the public walks, now with ladies of the world, now with nuns painted and masked (1).

In connexion with these devotees of love, one word more as to dress. « For gala days, they would wear doublet of satin, trunk-hose puffed and lined with lustring, velvet cap, white feather gaily cocked, short cloak of cloth or frieze, shoes elegantly made and

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in other words to breathe the same air as the loved object, to desire her ardently. CERVANTES, *Romances*.

The name *Embevecidos*, that is to say « drunk with love », was given to men who were so taken up with their passion and the delight of being by their mistress' side that they showed themselves incapable of attending to anything else; and « so it was permitted them to omit uncovering as to a man who has lost his wits ». Mme D'AULNOY. *Relation du Voyage d'Espagne* (Account of her Spanish Journey), vol. III.

(1) « On Wednesday, the 8th. December (1593) Commolet preached a sermon against the Nuns, declaring that men of birth walked with the same every day in Paris, so that in very truth nothing was to be seen but gentlemen and nuns arm in arm, the said nuns wearing under their veil the regular dress and ornaments of courtesans, painted powdered, masked, and foul-mouthed. The aforesaid Commolet belaboured them right well. » — P. DE L'ESTOILE. *Journal*, Dec. 1593.

cut low ; on working days, it is hard to say what less. » Everywhere under the new form assumed by passion, differing so widely from the old chivalrous love and tenderness, the ruffling gallant takes his pleasure with less and less restraint, « has his way, shakes his ears and away » to conquests new, indemnifying himself in this way for the tragic element in war, its toils and wearing anxieties.

Such profligacy, though even yet showing traces of the old manliness in manner and carriage, is all but universal ; and nowhere more than at the Court of France, where in 1560 the duc d'Este expressed his wonder to find a maid, and where the Court-ladies hid the result of their lapses from virtue by means of farthingales invented for that very end, had gallantry attained a more refined and perfect sensuality. Yet with all its hard recklessness, it still at times betrays a refractory instinct making in spite of all for the old fashioned respect and sentimental tenderness towards women, — an instinct the enterprising fair ones of the day cannot abide. It is a sort of survival, a hereditary *sport*, a reminiscence of the old *prudish* fashions long since abandoned. The sword indeed, it should be observed, has all along wished to respect women, — a thing not always easy to do, and after a while all but impossible, when women left off respecting themselves.

After having been in the first instance, to once more repeat a statement several times made already, treated as goddesses on earth by the Swordsmen of heroic and chivalrous ages, women once and for all

chose gallantry as better representing their tastes. They would fain, by adopting and publicly displaying an intentional absence of dignity, be rid of the tiresome cult of worship and respect that dogged their steps and hemmed them in. They laugh undisguisedly at desperate lovers, « givers of bouquets and silly flowers, » lovers who « waxing melancholy, full of protestations and lunatic proceedings generally. would indulge in early morning serenades and appear masked to offer them the holy water at Church » They look upon marks of respect now as mere affectation, and claim the right to change lovers when and how they please. Such are the laws of the women's code.

Nevertheless, just as in the days of sentiment and of fanatical devotion to ladies, when men staked « heart and body and soul » on love, women still exact from mere motives of vanity, even under the new régime of gallantry, some tokens of passionate attachment. To this end they make capital out of the affected nonsense of the Romances. Lanoue points out a great danger threatening the nobility of France in the habitual perusal of the romances of Amadis of Gaul, « which by their conceits are working its ruin ». Finally, as could not but happen, the less simple-minded swains end by protesting against absurd follies such as these: Salignac wishes to poison himself, and indeed supposes himself to do so, for the bold and dissolute Marguerite de Valois, who laughs at him for his pains (1);

(1) Tallemant des Réaux. *Historiettes :* Queen Marguerite, vol. I.

another gentlemen, a man of birth of Auvergne, in deference to a caprice of Mlle. de Cornon jumps into the Allier booted and sword at side. A Mons. de Genlis does the same in the Seine, to fish out the handkerchief of a wanton, who only makes fun of him (1). Candale for love's sake turns Protestant — no small thing to do in those days ; while Bussy d'Amboise according to Tallemant des Réaux, or according to Brantôme, Mons. de Lorges, on the precedent of an old legend, jumps into a lion's den to recover the glove a Court lady or maid of honour (2) has thrown down to test his devotion. Such some of the acts, — and there were many more of the same sort, — of senseless recklessness performed at this period out of mere gallantry or in an access of *broken-hearted* love, to use the English phrase.

« In love and war, for one pleasure a thousand pains », says an old French proverb. Say rather, a thousand follies ! These continued still in fashion in the days of the cavaliers. Tallemant des Réaux relates that the Comte de Grandpré would drink his mistress' health out of a loaded and cocked pistol, with his finger on the trigger (3), and how another of these « love's madmen, » as the victims of suchlike affectations were called in 1620 and thereabouts, used to swallow, and narrowly

(1) Tallemant des Réaux. *Historiettes*, vol. V.

(2) Tallemant des Réaux. *Historiettes*, vol. V, and Brantôme. *Dames Galantes*.

(3) Tallemant des Réaux. *Historiettes*, vol. VI, 464.

escaped suffocation in the process, the ribbons their ladies had given them.

Indeed long before the days of *the Fronde*, « when the standards of our heroes », says Sainte-Palaye, « waved at the behest of fair ladies and gallantry, » nothing was commoner than such tender infatuation on the part of the Sword, where women were concerned.

From Cleopatra's time, whose amusement was to make Mark Antony angle for salted fish, love-sick swains were cajoled into many a foolish freak and compromising eccentricity. Surviving till well into the XVIIth. Century, they still occasionally retain a smack of the « noble Paladin and courteous knight » of an earlier day ; while in other cases again they present side by side with true and dainty feelings of honour the strangest contrast of coarseness and brutality. Thus the Duc de Bellegarde (1), though notoriously kept by the wife of a President of Council, continued in spite of his equivocal, or rather unequivocal, position, one of the last sticklers for these exaggerations of chivalrous devotion. Starting on a campaign, he fell on his knees before Anne of Austria, with whom he professed himself in love, — a successor to Mazarin and the Duke of Buckingham, — and begged her to touch the hilt of his rapier.

Nevertheless, in spite of these last flickers of the old

(1) « Bellegarde was a General Officer and Commander of Saint-Louis ; he had been a very well-made man and very *gallant*, and had long been kept by the wife of one of the first magistrates of the Parliament. » — Saint-Simon. *Memoirs.*

sentimental infatuation, the Sword is now to proclaim outright its scorn and contempt for women. In face of constantly recurring scandals, the bourgeoisie, growing independent as it grows in self-importance, as well as the commonalty, folk full of ill-conditioned envy and hatred of their betters, who if a contemporary writer is to be believed, get meaner and uglier every day, become altogether hostile to the nobility of both sexes, the prestige and dignity of the whole class diminishing ever more and more in their eyes.

Sin after sin of self-indulgence is committed in the face of day, and the continual progress of popular ill-will can be readily followed ; revolt against the higher classes is ever organizing, strengthening and spreading in France from the date of the first rising of the *League* and its accompanying disorders. In all places and at all times since, the movement has reappeared again and again, at once overweening in its consequence, self-seeking in its ends, and stupid in its means.

In proportion as fresh grievances revive the excitement, does it assume a character more and more aggressive, always finding a convenient pretext in the public wrongs. Now indeed there appears among the first fruits of the newly invented printing press, taking the place of the old-fashioned romances of Chivalry and tales of martial adventure, — works of imagination in the main inspired by female influence, — a new class of literature, definitely hostile to women, and in which a spirit of active revolt against their predominance is manifested, while simultaneously

the popular enmity grows more marked than ever and the general ill-esteem in which they are held more pronounced.

In a metrical tale (Fabliau) of the XIVth. Century (1) already a menace addressed to the frail beauties of the day occurs already fallen into discredit : « This day shall be known the faith you keep with those good knights that bear so many toils and troubles for your sake. » In the same widely read works we learn, amongst other mysterious particulars, how the fine ladies of olden times made use of perfumed baths, into which by a refinement of curious sensuality, or of cleanliness possibly, they were wont to admit new lovers.

Still more complete are other revelations of the Printing-press, an invention now brought to full perfection; it shows us the Poet who continued and completed the *Roman de la Rose* openly appeasing with yet another insult the sex he had grossly and coarsely offended. It tells us what disease Queen Claude died of, and how the famous Admiral de Bonnivet was for seizing by force the « Marguerite of Marguerites, » the Pearl of Pearls, the enticing sister of his Sovereign, whose private schemes he thus ran the risk of thwarting.

All this information is further supplemented by the literary confidences of a number of female writers, who commit high treason as it were against themselves and their sisters, and contravene the

(1) Fabliau of *Court Mantel*.

sacred *esprit de corps* of their sex. For two hundred years past these have been revealing the most intimate and secret of their naughty instincts. This remark we felt bound to make incidentally at this point, apart from the main evidence to be adduced as to the social responsibilities of ladies and the Sword reciprocally.

Both in Italy and France it is, as already insisted on in a previous page, the minor poets and the writers of the lighter literature of the day, beginning with the tales of Boccaccio and the *Contes* of the Queen of Navarre, who have best delineated the manners and characteristics of their age. We are but ill acquainted with the old-world life and ways of such Peoples as did not possess this type of literature to reveal their secrets to us.

Thanks to the indiscretions of the writers of *Nouvelles* and anecdotes, it is easy to see how towards the end of the XVIth. Century martial love, changing once again in its outward forms of manifestation, enters so to speak on a moulting season, and presently takes on an entirely novel aspect.

« The love intrigues of the Court, which had never been in abeyance since the reign of François I, who had drawn the high-born ladies of France to his Court and lodged them there, when Henri III. mounted the throne, fell into quite intolerable excesses », writes Varillas (1). « The queen of this debauch of

(1) Varillas. *History of Henri III of France* (1589), vol. VI, xii.

gallantry was, » he adds, « Mme. de Sauves (1), wife of a Secretary of State. » Here we find displayed to the light of day, for the information of modern times, the spectacle of the daughter of a noble house turning courtesan, and a hundred times more lascivious, by what Brantôme says, « than common women and suchlike. »

« The French ladies of these days, » 1574, « welcomed only offers of service from which they could derive satisfaction for their vanity, while for the main point, they were far from difficult in granting their favours, discretion of course always assured, » is the assertion of the same Varillas, whom we have just seen arraigning Mme. de Sauves.

While self-interest and pleasure thus follow their bent, the highborn lady, the pride of fairest womanhood, more and more loses her sense of self-respect, — an indisputable sign of social degeneracy : Sapphic practices are widely followed, while the authoress of the *Ruelle mal assortie* (Ill-mated Bed-fellows) (2), the new Queen of Navarre, who was already debauched at the age of eleven, lavishes her favours

(1) Mme de Sauves (Charlotte de Beaune-Samblançay), born about 1551.

(2) Marguerite de Valois. *La ruelle mal assortie, ou Entretiens amoureux d'une dame éloquente avec un cavalier gascon.* Ill-mated Bed-fellows, or Amorous Conversations between an Eloquent Lady and a Cavalier of Gascony), Paris, 1644.

The *Divorce satyrique* gives the names of 23 chief lovers of Queen Margot.

on a score or more « of rufflers, foppish young lords and others » (1).

Everything at this period points to a marked diminution in the gentleman and fighter of his old bodily vigour, for the weight of his arms now makes him consumptive. Without a doubt he is just as brave as were his ancestors, but conscious of being no longer robust enough to face either the vices or the mêlées and tourneys of yore, he adopts as most suitable to his flaccid muscles, — along with the latest modes of martial exercise, where tilting at the ring is all that is left, — the new ways of killing offered him by the use of artillery and fire-arms generally, now brought to a condition of full efficiency.

Though Bacon and Leibnitz have not as yet invented and made current that most pretentious of words « Progress, » the *shibboleth* of the gasconading prophets of modern civilisation, — an invention, it must be allowed, very long deferred, — every aspiration of the swordsman of these times (when the musket still weighs over twenty pounds), debilitated as he is by woman's influence, is directed towards the further improvement of the arquebus.

Military spirit is lost in the strangest confusion of conflicting notions, for henceforward the gentleman is

(1) « He assails the first troop, which was stationed at the water's edge, then without loosing hold in that quarter, proceeds also to assail at the opening of a road sundry *rufflers, foppish lords*, who held firm. » — D'Aubigné. *General History*.

bound to reckon with *arms of long range*, the use of which he had always hitherto despised as unworthy of him.

Individual courage still exists, without doubt ; it admits of no denial that men who march without flinching to meet musketry fire or who are first to scale an earthwork with the certainty of death before them, must always be heroes. Still modern warfare, tending as it does to grow more and more sombre in spite of the acts of bravery incidental to it, *has* fallen in prestige in forfeiting its gallantry and grace and dash. It is carried on nowadays under most trying conditions of gloom and anxiety that are all in favour of the encroachments of a heavy listlessness in striking contrast with the brilliancy, the « pomp and circumstance of glorious war » in olden days.

For the Ancient world a battle was a scene of noble effort and brilliant achievement ; at one battle Caesar gave out as watch-word of the day the wanton name of Venus, in times when Rome had not yet fallen from her high estate, and subject to Barbarian rule had melted down the golden statue of *Virtus*, or « manly spirit. »

CHAPTER VI

« Villanous Saltpetre » destructive of the Soldierly Spirit.

> .....It was great pity
> This villanous saltpetre should be digg'd
> Out of the bowels of the harmless earth.
> Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd
> So cowardly.
> (I Part *Henry IV.* Act I, sc. 3.)

If overstepping the limit originally assigned to our subject, our analysis is extended half a century beyond the epoch when the Sword really ended its career, we shall find with the introduction of the flint-lock, the immediate successor of the old musket, the race of men and soldiers employing all their ingenuity to obviate the necessity of any laborious exertion of the human muscles.

Fatigue, or say at once any muscular effort of the arms, is regarded in our day as something painful; so machinery replaces wherever possible the action of the muscles. We are no longer able to endure hardships, and thousands of doctors prosper and often make fortunes, while the wisest members of the Faculty devote their energies to chloroforming the intolerable agonies of pain and fortifying with iron the pale blood of these anaemic days.

Soon succeeding generations, feeble and languid for want of sap and stamina, will see themselves reduced,

in face of fresh engines of destruction, to yet further increase the range of distance at which battles are fought. Such is the effect of the continual advance made in scientific warfare by artificers, chemists, mechanicians, aëronauts and divers. In the near future the great military powers will no longer be the Nations that have the best Generals and the bravest troops, or even the most approved artillery, but simply such as are able to buy from some new inventor means of destruction more deadly than all the others. This gives an element of disloyalty, a something underhand, to future battles. Personal prowess becomes of less and less importance.

Such in modern warfare is the inevitable and fatal tendency of human intelligence, making mere courage of smaller and smaller national importance.

As to moral progress, looked at from the military point of view, can we say that, since the invention in Germany of the pistol in 1387, since the terrible artillery of Charles VIII, which scared all Italy before the battle of Fornova, since the employment of the stealthy torpedo, — invented in 1771 (1), — since the use, to come to later times, of rapid-firing arms of precision, of mitrailleuses and exploding

(1) Torpedoes were invented in America in 1771 by a certain Bushnell, who incurred such an amount of public odium that he was compelled to change his name and leave his country.

Subsequently they were brought to higher perfection by Fulton, the inventor of steamboats, and eventually tried in 1812 against the English fleet.

shells, little playfulnesses of contemporary philanthropy ready to sacrifice its soldiers by tens of thousands, can we really say mankind has grown gentler and more humane in war ? Is it enough to justify the high-sounding word, *Progress*, to nail up the Swiss redcross flag to a few waggons and call them ambulances ?

No ! there stand the figures to answer for us, and prove how the aforesaid Progress maims and kills in battle far and away more of brave and efficient combatants, in proportion to the numbers engaged, than the most savage barbarism ever slaughtered. And yet the world in 1718, according to Montesquieu's calculation (1) contained not much more than one tenth the population it had in Caesar's time, who only lost 200 men in all at Pharsalia.

In former days the wounds made by the sword, the *arme blanche*, were clean and healthy ; Fleurange in one battle (2) received forty-six, and speedily recovered. Finally, on actual enquiry into the general physical condition of the soldiers of the present day, it

(1) « After a calculation as precise as the nature of such inquiries admits of, I find there exist on the earth barely the tenth part of the men who were there in Caesar's day. What is still more surprising is that the world is getting more depopulated every day ; and if this continue at the same rate, in ten centuries it will be a desert. » — MONTESQUIEU. *Lettres Persanes* (1718).

(2) « And subsequently was found the young adventurer (Fleurange) among the dead ; who was not at first recognized, for he had forty-six very large wounds, whereof the smallest took six weeks to heal. And when his father

is found from the series of regulations governing conscription in France and recent ministerial decisions on the subject (1) that in that country the ordinary height of conscripts has fallen by an average of five centimetres within the last sixty years alone. In face of this fact does not the improvement of modern periods seem chimerical ? If we are to regard as progress anatomical degeneration in men and enfeeblement of health and sexual power in women, a condition of things that at the present day makes the latter by common consent resort to drugs to promote their occasional, — and sterile, — sexual enjoyments, may we not more appro-

had found him, he put him on the horse of a camp-girl of *lansquenets* who was found there ; and so had him brought along with the troops. » — Fleurange. *Memoirs*, ch, xxxvii, year 1513.

(1) « We might well be tempted to think the race of fine men is disappearing, in view of the recent presidential decision which has just lowered the minimum of height fixed for the *gendarmerie*.

« And observe this is not the first time. Other previous decisions had already reduced the said minimum of height from 1 m. 71 to 1 m. 70 for the cavalry, and from 1 m. 69 to 1 m. 68 for the infantry... Yet another final concession, — two centimetres' grace for the cavalry forces in favour of men redeeming, says the official report, their over-short stature by a robust constitution.

« Well ! it seems these concessions are not sufficient, and the Government, with despair in its heart, has just reduced to this same figure last mentioned the minimum of height required for *gendarmes*, but this time without any grace, this stature being looked upon as indispensable *to impose respect*. » — *Figaro*, 17th. Dec. 1878.

priately entitle all this a *progress of degradation?*

M. Champouillon, Surgeon-in-Chief in the French service, wrote not long since : « We are not justified in counting upon the co-operation of the female to compensate for the present wear and tear of the male » (1), — hardly a reassuring opinion for the future of the race !

Happy days ! when was seen taking part in a joust at Vienne a sturdy Knight of a hundred summers (2) ; happy days ! when at the famous

(1) M. Champouillon, Surgeon-in-Chief in the French Army, one of the chief ornaments of military hygiene in that country, has quite lately published a very interesting work on Anaemia, « that disease so essentially modern, and which has now long ago overpassed the limits of medical science to become a real and pressing social question ». Dr Champouillon treats it with equal knowledge and originality.

« A sight which has always struck me is this procession before the Council of revision of the dry husks of the Parisian population, and notably of the class which the chronicles of the old Tournaments represent as possessing the anatomy of Giants. The greater part of these young people, I speak of those born and residing in Paris, are alike in showing a pitiful exterior, a frame long and slender, fragile as a stalk without any woody fibre, a pale complexion, colourless lips, a flaccid and transparent skin. To look at them, one would be tempted to say that death, when he comes, will find almost nothing left to destroy in them. »

(2) In 1278 at a Tourney which was held at Vienna, under the Emperor Rudolph I, a Knight of a hundred years of age, Otto von Haslau, jousted with his great-grandson, Georg Turs. The fact is mentioned in S. Mailath, *History of Austria*, I.

battle of Anghiari (1), of which Leonardo da Vinci was commissioned to make commemorative drawings, there fell on both sides, thanks to mail of proof, in four hours' fighting, only one man, and he was killed by a fall from his horse, as related by the Florentine Machiavelli in his *History of Florence*. The same celebrated Poli-

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(1) « At no period was war carried into an enemy's country waged with less danger for the aggressors. At the battle of Anghiari in 1440 in the midst of so complete a rout, in a battle so obstinate that it lasted four hours, only a single man was killed, who again met his death not by the enemy's fire or by any honourable blow, but by a fall from his horse and being trodden underfoot by others. In those days a battle presented no danger: men fought always on horseback, protected completely by armour and guaranteed their life if they surrendered; they were thus always safe from death, — by their armour during the engagement, and equally surrendering as prisoners when they could fight no longer. » — MACHIAVELLI. *History of Florence*.

Paulus Jovius has mentioned the same fact in much the same terms, and it is stated also in the *Contes d'Eutrapel*, — that only a single man was killed at the battle of Anghiari.

« So far as the danger of being killed goes, to which the generals and *condottieri* were exposed, during the four and twenty years the late Italian wars lasted, fewer instances have been seen than in ten years among the Ancients. In fact, with the exception of the Count Lodovico de la Mirandola, who fell at Ferrara... and of the Duc de Nemours, who was slain later at the battle of Cerignola, I know no instances of Generals killed by cannon shot; for Monseigneur de Foix was killed at Ravenna by the steel, not by fire-arms. » — MACHIAVELLI. *Discourse on Livy the Historian*, bk. II.

tician wrote nearly four centuries ago : « With regard to the assertion that in future there will be no more hand-to-hand fighting, and that War will be carried on solely with artillery, I hold this opinion to be entirely erroneous, and I think my feeling will be shared by all such as shall desire to revive in our armies the courage of our ancestors. Indeed whoever would wish to train up good soldiers is bound to accustom them to attack the enemy sword in hand... »

Over and above the personal bravery which hand-to-hand fighting necessitated whether in general engagements or in individual encounters the habit of carrying this, the noblest of weapons, gave to the old-world Nations accustomed to military training a distinctive carriage and bearing which to this day marks the races that still go armed.

In days when fortifications were stormed at the point of the Sword, regimental life was a liberal education for the rustic, and the profession of arms a patent of nobility to the veteran. The Sword is a thing of the past, and for lack of it the old proud mien and the old punctilious sense of honour have ceased to exist in those classes where a fellow will first exchange the vilest epithets and foulest aspersions with his neighbour, and next minute go and clink glasses with him in the nearest tavern. Such degradation of character is found neither in Italy nor in Spain, countries of the *stiletto* and the *navaja* (knife).

CHAPTER VII

Transition to the Age of the Cavaliers. — Minions and Flagellants.

Towards the end of the XVIth. Century the effects following from the interaction of Sword and Sex are once again manifested under fresh aspects. This time they mark the epoch of transition connecting the period of gallantry and the gallants with that of the cavaliers.

Already the young nobility of the Sword, as shown above, is sadly enfeebled by debauchery. The exhausted gallant, « the veteran servant of Venus, » is good for hardly anything now but to make a *fop* or a minion ; and so these minions, « these gilded breastplates, these resplendent morions », as they were nicknamed at the siege of La Fère, these courtiers turned courtesans (1), refuse to put on armour any more, the weight of which they no longer possess the strength to support.

Under Henri III of France, exquisites carried this

(1) « All scented with musk and civet. These folk call themselves Courtiers, well dressed and polished ; but by their ways and habits if you will measure them with the eye of reason, you would say they were not men, but harlots : — Théophile Folengo.

effeminacy so far as to have their Sword carried by a lackey, on occasion accompanied by bravos in their pay (1). Nothing is too bad for these emasculate creatures, « lurching from one foot to the other, with a half turn of the body, and with heads elaborately curled. » They welcome shame as a road to fortune, making themselves all the while ludicrous with their extravagancies of dress. « These are superficial, but still ominous for the future », said « the wise and good Montaigne », noting them all tricked out and over-dressed.

After sacrificing honour to ambition, these *decadents*, these « bedizened swaggerers, » marry ladies of the Court, the refuse of the King's amours. And so women, in face of this new proof of the indifference with which they are regarded, conven-

(1) In the XVIth. and XVIIth. Centuries, people of condition had themselves attended by bravos in their pay and armed lackeys...« And that is why you see yonder lackey with all that grand accoutrement and that dagger with guarded hilt. » — Agrippa d'Aubigné. *Les Aventures du baron de Fœneste* (The Adventures of the Baron de Fœneste).

And nowadays we often see men of a low extraction despise the nobility and play the hero, because they are surrounded by a great number of insolent, ill-conditioned lackeys, who carry *long swords*, and very often pocket-pistols, to guard their master, who proud and haughty to have such an armed cohort at his side, swaggers and looks askance at the most virtuous and noblest gentlemen who may not possess the means to indulge in such expense. » — V. de la Colombière. *Le Vray Théâtre d'honneur et de chevalerie* (The True Theatre of Honour and Knighthood).

iently forgetting as they always contrive to do what it is to their advantage to forget, decline all responsibility in connexion with the degradation and enfeeblement of the Sword, which the exercise obtained in the war of skirmishes and in the hunt, itself « become an opportunity for adultery », no longer reinforces enough to please their wishes.

Proceeding as usual by way of comparison, they accuse the gentlemen of the Sword of not having known how to preserve, in arms and love, their prestige of yore. « In former days, » they lament hypocritically, « when Kings, Princes and great Lords took up the cross to go over seas to the Holy Land, doubtless nought was permissible to us women but to fast and pray, to make vows and supplications, that God might grant them a prosperous journey and a safe return ; but nowadays that we see them do nothing better than ourselves, it is allowed us to speak of what we please. « Pray God for them ? — nay ! why should we, seeing they do no nobler or greater deeds than we ? »

So the feeling of mutual contempt gets keener and keener between the two sexes in the upper ranks of society, while simultaneously the recollection and admiration of the doughty deeds of the « great men who are dead », — the expression is Julius Caesar's, — grow more and more dim among the lower orders.

The man of birth losing at once the benefit of ancestral repute and of his own strength and dignity,

the peasants, who as a rule respect only established authority and muscular pre-eminence, are ungrateful enough to forget how the nobility of the Sword, — the feudal suzerains of Castles and strongholds, — had hitherto invariably defended and protected their class. They begin to despise the enfeebled lordlings, as well as the fair, bold-eyed ladies, against whom their wives, the partners of their degradation, delight to set them on, so satisfying their spiteful instincts of envy and dislike. Then in France, as indeed more or less everywhere else, popular odium begins to pursue the follies of the nobility, far too openly perpetrated to escape censure.

About the year 1580, to divert the maids of honour and other fair ladies of the Louvre, the Court was in the habit of going abroad with them *masked*, and after committing various follies among the humbler *bourgeoisie*, finally making them join the processions of the Flagellants, where the best made dames figured naked, pell-mell with bare-backed rascals of every sort. L'Estoile supplies details of the most indecent nature. Seeing such licence and such shameless self-exposure (1), the commonalty, already showing

(1) The processions of the *battus* (flogged) were led by the King himself at the head of all his Court. To adopt Brantôme's expressions, « there were ladies, beautiful and pleasant in converse, well accomplished and all palpitating to set the world on fire. »

« God be thanked ! » we read in a document of the time quoted by Dulaure (History of Paris), there are such and such parishes where as many as five or six hundred per-

signs, especially in Paris, of degeneracy of type and of the depth of ignoble meanness and deformation they were destined, on the lowest social levels at any rate, to descend to later, are full of a sour, silent indignation against the noble classes. They give themselves to every sort of vile habit, and wearying of commonplace bestiality, « they debauch pages of the Court. » « The name of minions, » L'Estoile states, « begins at this date to be bandied about on the lips of the populace, to whom they were intensely odious, as well for their mocking, insolent ways as for their foolish ornaments and womanish, immodest dress... » Their unseemly behaviour and their duels in the open streets exasperated the dregs of the suburban population, making them « threaten to kill all these swaggerers, for the most part moustachio'd Courtiers, who », as Père Cotton said in a sermon preached at the Louvre, « look for all the world as if they would fain pick the stars out of the sky to eat em in a cold hash (1)», —

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sons are to be seen taking part in these processions all naked. » On the 14th. of February in the same year (1589), other processions of the sort, took place, notably in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs, in which were more than a thousand persons in a state of absolute nudity. All this went well with the vices of the time.

« In these days (April 1589), to rob a man's neighbour, to murder his nearest relatives, to plunder altars, to desecrate churches, to violate wives and maids, to hold every living soul to ransom, is the regular business of a Leaguer »

PIERRE DE L'ESTOILE, *Journal*.

(1) PIERRE DE L'ESTOILE. *Journal* (Thursday, 22nd. July, 1610).

the least of the faults they were guilty of at that date!

« Fie ! fie ! » bawled the future Leaguers, when one of these minions passed along the streets with locks all plaited and curled.

A similar revolt of coarse brutality against luxurious living and wordly ways appeared in England under still more violent forms. At the Theatre, in Shakespeare's day, at a time when in taverns a customer used by way of inspiring respect to put down his rapier before him on the table (1), the pit was in the habit of throwing mud at the *Gentlemen* and spitting at them, shouting the while « Down with fools! » To all which the *gentlemen* replied merely with a few sallies of abuse (2).

As a rule, — and « reason why » as the lawyers say — ladies were scarcely any better treated, and that because they were the first and chief cause of the doubts which arose as to the purity of noblemen's descent. The notorious profligacy of married women naturally caused the legitimacy of their children to be suspected, even the first fruits of their marriages.

Women, those crack-brained rebels, « those fair mirrors of great cities », are only too fond of braving public opinion. Women it was who first « kicked over the traces » and took a positive delight in doing it. This sturdy effrontery of theirs never failed to

(1) In *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare speaks of people who on entering a tavern put their sword by their side on the table, with the words, « God grant I may have no need of thee to-day! »

(2) Chateaubriand. *Essay on English Literature.*

exasperate, we repeat, the jealousy and ill-will of humbler folk, and thus became, subsequently to the agitations of the League, a chief cause of irreparable evils.

With a « God help us! 'tis a mad world, my masters ! » we must now pick up again the thread of our investigation at the reigns of François II. and Charles IX, — a date when in spite of their relative degeneracy the nobles of the Sword were still of considerable importance and exerted a powerful influence on society by their luxury and gallantry.

Uuder the patrons of the *minions*, — the three Valois, whose Royal sister was hooted by the populace of Agen, (« riot starts on its mad career »), the Sword, which up to the XVIth. Century had preserved a certain amplitude of proportions, fines down and lengthens out into the slender rapier. Henri Estienne, about 1575, speaking of the life and habits of his day, wrote, « Why! three swords of to-day could be made out of one of the old kind. Nay ! many a sword of those days has a guard that by itself weighs more than two of the present weapons, — I mean with their guards and all. »

In proportion as the Sword diminishes in weight, the fine gentleman, the exquisite, the successor of the true Court gallant of an earlier generation, suffers a gradual but unceasing enfeeblement. A contemporary of the *minions* pure and simple says, complaining of their degeneracy: « When our good King François was on the throne, in many places, — that is in many gentlemen's mansions, — the great pot was still put on the table, whereon was only a great dish set out

with beef, mutton, veal and bacon, and the great bundle of cooked herbs whereof was made a veritable restorative and elixir of life... » Quite different «what is served up nowadays in little platters holding mere samples of food. » And so, continues the critic, « the men of to-day living on savours, discourse, kissing of hands and curtseys, are only half-men, as long and thin as so many leeches, tricky as foxes and fine-drawn as a furriers's needle...'Tis not a *minion* of this womanish sort, with his curled, twisted and plaited locks, could stand up against the fatigue of war with his silly bantering ways...»

A careful examination will discover in these novel fashions of living and new luxuriousness of the table the persistent influence of « the eternal feminine », to use Goethe's hackneyed expression, women from Eve downwards having always notoriously represented the love of dainty feeding.

Everywhere, towards the end of the age of gallantry, and this first of all in Italy, later in France also, the young nobility of the Sword gets more and more effeminate and corrupt. Everywhere, through women's fault, the habits of ancient Sodom are found, as practised in the Isle of the Hermaphrodites, the rites and mysteries of which have been recorded by Cardinal du Perron. In this isle the *minions* carry rapiers with perfumed blades (1). Forty of these puny blades

(1) *Description de l'isle des Hermaphrodites nouvellement découverte.* (Description of the Isle of the Hermaphrodites lately discovered)... Cardinal Du Perron — or Artus Thomas.

were needed, at the States General of Blois, to dare the murder of the Duc de Guise, a single man coming out alone and enervated from a night passed with one of the fairest of the Court ladies, — so writes Miron (1), Physician to King Henri III.

The ruffling swordsmen of the period, the dissolute exquisites of those swaggering days, little accustomed as they were in War to the action of explosives, found themselves completely out of their bearings in face of the arquebus-fire of the foot-men.

With the infantry originated, according to Marignan, the vast importance attached to fire-arms. It created a quasi-democracy in armies : for under the new conditions of fighting « all men may arrive at command, » as Guichardin pointed out.

Thus the fighting nobility, in presence of the mere caprices of Fortune annihilating in action skill and strength alike, lost to some degree its old feeling of native pre-eminence in battle. Conscious of their progressive enfeeblement by hereditary taint, while simultaneously women with never flagging activity and enterprise co-operated in the process with all the resources of their sexual charm, they are after 1560 given up wholly and entirely to boasting and quarrelling, growing ever more quick to take offence and fond of the duel. They cultivate an exaggerated sensi-

(1) The lady in question was Mme de Marmoutier (Charlotte de Beaune) — *Relation de la mort du duc de Guise par le sieur Miron, médecin du Roy Henri III.* (Account of the Death of the Duc de Guise, by the Sieur Miron, Physician to King Henri III.)

tiveness to insult, while concurrently fence becomes more and more complicated and the point of honour more refined than ever. This is the heyday of fencing schools and « pretty bits of bravado ». Men fight now in pairs, in fours or even larger bands, like the Gladiators of Antiquity. The seconds and the thirds engage « simply for the pleasure of crossing blades », — «Italien parade», to use Lanoue's phrase. In this way, in France alone, within the space of eighteen years, four thousand gentlemen (1) got themselves killed.

(1) President Hénault, in his *Abrégé de l'Histoire de France* (Abridgement of the History of France), says that the express prohibition of duelling by Henri II., so far from making these more rare, had made them commoner than before.

« In March 1607, the King (Henri IV.) was advised that since his Majesty's accession to the throne it was calculated that four thousand gentlemen of birth had been killed in these wretched duels, which for a period of eighteen years, gives very nearly two hundred and twenty a year. « — L'Estoile. *Journal du règne de Henri IV.* (Journal of the Reign of Henri IV.)

Another Author reports that three hundred persons of quality perished by the same means during the minority of Louis XIV., and according to the estimate of the famous Père Théophile Renaud, the number of those who fell in duels in the space of thirty years would have supplied a fair-sized army.

« In this same month of August (1607) there took place between Poitou and Anjou a duel between thirty gentlemen of birth, the result being that twenty five were left dead on the field, while the five wounded were in hardly better case. The chiefs of the quarrel were the Sieur de Brézé and

This petulance of the Sword, running directly counter to the Royal edicts, originates the chamber-duel (1). and further stimulated by the spirit of discord and ever growing love of gallantry among ladies, — the cause of by far the greater part of the quarrels, which it is still held fashionable to have for their sake, — becomes one of the marked and special characteristics of the age.

With the almost universal adoption of the dagger as a subsidiary weapon along with the sword, as the new rules of fence prescribe (2), the habits of swords-

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the Sieur de Saint-Gemme. The Maréchal de Brissac went to the King and informed him of the facts, who however took no action in the matter». — Pierre de l'Estoile, *Journal.*

These duels in bands recall very ancient customs. In Italy, «at Ravenna, at Orvieto, at Sienna, there were held in the Middle Ages combats of Gladiators ; on certain fixed days two troops of armed citizens would fight and kill each other to amuse the crowd.»

«In 1346 Petrarch expresses his indignation at seeing the revival at Naples of the butcheries of the Coliseum.» — Valery. *Curiosités et Anecdotes italiennes.* (Italian Curiosities and Anecdotes).

(1) Fausto da longiano. *Duello del Fausto da Longiano,... con tutti li cartelli missivi,... Del tempo del cavallieri erranti, de bravi, et de l'eta nostra.* (Duel of Fausto da Longiano,... with all the Letters of Challenge,... Treating also of the Days of wandering Champions, Bravos, and of Our Own Times). Venice, 1559.

(2) The use of the dagger as seconding the sword in fencing and duelling, according to the Italian method, dates only from the XVIth. Century. From 1560 to about 1640 this practice became, to speak generally, universal in

men and rufflers undergo yet another modification in Europe. Italian fashions, sullied with sundry faults of their own, now combine with French braggadocio in « unlimited and extravagant swagger ». Simultaneously the bold and enterprising ways of wooing which had replaced the long, slow methods of an earlier school of love-making now long since discredited, degenerate into sheer insolence and lubricity.

This change, one primarily due to the foreign Princess, Catherine de Medici, supervened however without any sudden rupture of continuity ; indeed no practice or habit ever ends abruptly, there is always a transition period uniting for a time the present and the past. Accordingly, even during the times of excessive licence at the end of the XVIth. Century, traces are still here and there to be observed of the old chivalrous spirit of love. The Sword, spite of all that has come and gone, is still the submissive servant of the sex. The little company of Court ladies at the Louvre did its best to prove the fact, and the « Flying Squadron » of Catherine, that Royal procuress (her *seraglio of coquettes* is Sauval's expression), is ever active, and in 1579

Europe. « Double arms » was the term applied to the sword and dagger, both being mounted with equally elaborate workmanship. Hence the common phrase of refusal. A man would say, to excuse himself for not giving something asked for, « I have the dagger as well » — implying, and I won't give it up, any more than I will my sword.

brings about the civil war known in History as « La Guerre des Amoureux » (The Lovers' War).

Severe as the Historian feels bound to be on the disorders and misdoings which women forced on the nobility subsequently to the Renaissance, it can never be denied that in these Spanish-Italian fashions, in the gallant ways and habits borrowed from these countries and first adopted at the Court of the Valois Princes, then widely disseminated North and South from that centre, there resided a quite irresistible charm. What dash and spirit ! how romantic and dramatic, how well adapted according to our present-day ideas to captivate the imagination in its endeavour to recover vivid pictures of the life of Love and War in olden times.

Even under their most reprehensible forms, feminine faults invariably exercise a measure of fascination ; but it must be clearly acknowledged that the easy-going morality of old days, charming as it may have been in its graceful and audacious gallantry, yet seduced the Sword into the most odious corruptions and abuses.

From the days when Queen Margot wore a wig made of the golden hair of her servants and pages, and all round her hoop carried the hearts of her lovers *dead and gone* (1), in the days when the

(1) « Queen Margot used to wear a great hoop having little pockets all round, in each one of which she put a box containing the heart of one of her lovers dead and gone ; for she was careful, as they each of them died, to have the heart embalmed. This hoop was hung up every

saying « Tout va comme Margot, et Margot comme tout », great ladies used to talk *Phœbus* (artificial bombastic Court dialect) (1), — and even made their male companions do the same. In the same way they taught their cavaliers at the Court of the Louvre to lightly trifle with Love.

Curtailing its duration, they gave wings, so to speak, to Love, so that after 1569 affairs of the sort are conducted at full speed from day to day, mere matters of opportunity and the fancy of the moment. Their ephemeral intrigues are carried through at racing pace ; kiss follows quick on kiss, while every thought for the future is excluded by mutual consent from these rapid, frivolous, forced combinations, — which yet are not without a charm, such is the indescribable fascination women command. In such times of never-ending struggle and fighting, the uncertainty of the morrow gives no time for delay ; to use an expression of Plutarch's, « it is war in the midst of pleasure, and pleasure snatched in the midst of war ».

Love is never named now, — only love-affairs ;

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night on a hook secured by a padlock, behind the head of her bed. » — Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes ;* no. 15 Queen Marguerite, vol. I.

(1) Compare in England the « Euphuism » — so named from the chief character in John Lyly's two books, *Euphues, the Anatomy of wit* and *Euphues and his England* (1573 and 1580), — current at the Courts of Elizabeth and James I. See Sir Walter Scott's Monastery, — Sir Piercie Shafton; also for extravagance in dress of the time, Note on Chapter X. of same novel. [Transl.]

and like the lark at dawn, these are swift to be away and on the wing with a trill of song.

Women at this epoch, — indeed ever since the Reformation times, — « sin, pray, confess, and — begin again. » This was the age, one of so much « gentle wickedness », as Brantôme has it, that invented the suggestive epithet of *maîtresse volante* (flying Mistress), a phrase well expressing an easiness of morals at once very frank and very French.

Life in those days was spent amid all the intoxication, all the lavish expenditure of force, of an existence stirred to feverish activity by the most potent stimulants. It was a hard life ! Women bore up sturdily ; but not a few gallants, caught between two fires, like the escutcheon of Naples between its two Sirens, *blasés*, harassed, — more than ever War harassed and fatigued them, — took the monk's frock in sheer lassitude and satiety. Hence the old Spanish proverb, which we may translate, « When the Devil had had his fill, the Devil a monk would be ».

Ah ! galant, galant,
Que tu es fringant !
Si te faut-il meure.

(Ho ! gallant gentleman, brisk and gay
Pity you needs must die one day !)

In actual fact excess of licence does at this period

lead to weariness and distaste. The true gallant, the noble lover, is to disappear and give place to quite a new social type, — the Cavalier.

Previous to the formal reformation of old-time gallantry, profligacy, declares L'Estoile in his *Journal*, reached its highest point in the reign of Henri IV. « Debauchery and folly, ballets and lewd *divertissements*, duels and every form of impiety, were more than ever in the ascendant at this time ». Under the last of the Valois sovereigns already « was the corruption such, that foolish buffoons, harlots and *minions* had all the credit. It was they disposed of all favours, and the tit-bits of patronage. » Le Gas, (the King's favourite) sold the Bishopric of Amiens to a Court wench, one who had long been on the open market « (1). In such terms, and this in the most gallant country in the world and the one most « respectful towards fair ladies, » we find the Authors of the period expressing themselves on the faults of the sex, and chronicling the most conspicuous follies women are still able to make the Sword commit. All evidence points to the senseless pranks they suggest to men of quality, their companions.

(1) A little later, under Henri IV : « On Saturday the 12th. November » (1594), writes L'Estoile, « I was shown a handkerchief which a Parisian embroiderer had just finished for Madame de Liancourt, who was to carry it next day at a ballet, and had agreed with him on a price of 1700 crowns, which she was to pay him in cash ». — Pierre de l'Estoile. *Journal.*

Bassompierre relates in his *Memoirs* how in 1606, by the advice of the ladies, he had a costume made for him for the completion of which « were required not less than fifty pounds of pearls. I wished it, » he adds, « to be of violet coloured gold-tissue, with palm-branches interlacing. So, before leaving Paris, I, — who had but seven hundred crowns in my purse, — ordered a costume that was to cost me fourteen thousand crowns..., to say nothing of a sword with diamond hilt worth five thousand crowns (1). — Total, something above 167,000 francs (£ 6680)!

This extravagant luxury marking the transition from the age of gallantry to that of the Cavaliers, goes equally well with the early days of the latter period. The most shameless licentiousness is universally prevalent, and is to be seen even in the up-bringing of the Sovereign's sons. To divert the Dauphin (afterwards Louis XIII.), still quite a young boy, according to what we are told in the *Journal* of the Physician, Jean Héroald (2), attached to his person, the great Court-ladies for the time being sing him softly various obscene ditties to relieve the premature melancholy of the young Prince, tell him naughty tales, or else dance before him, with their lovers, the « Saint-Jean des Choux »

(1) Bassompierre. *Journal de ma Vie* (Journal of my Life), Published by the Société de l'Histoire de France, vol. I.

(2). Jean Héroald. *Journal sur l'enfance et la jeunesse de Louis XIII.* (Journal relating to the Childhood and Youth of Louis XIII.) 1601-1628.

(*St. John of The Cabbages*), name of a coarse country dance) a dance in which each performer kicked the hind-quarters of the one, whether cavalier or lady, who was in front of him.

Such being the morality and habits of the Court, it may be taken for granted there had not for many a day past been any question of what, for Barbarous and Chivalrous ages, we have called the ideal.

Further it is found noted by Héroald (2) that to amuse this young scion of Royalty, the same who in later life boasted of loving women only from the head to the waist, the most *advanced* nymphs of his circle used to delight in playing in his presence, *La Farce du badin mari* and *La femme garce et l'Amant qui la débauche* (The Farce of the Foolish Husband, The Enterprising Wife and the Lover who Seduces her). Does not all this afford a pretty good idea of the morality and habits of the time, — a transition period, that has ceased to be precisely an epoch of gallantry, and not yet become properly speaking a Cavalier one.

CHAPTER VIII

Age of the Cavaliers. — France the Model of Fashion to other Nations.

It is altogether beyond our powers to delineate historically all the different phases of degeneration affecting the Sword and the Sex simultaneously in each of the European nations. Accordingly, pursuing the same course as we have done for the epoch of *gallantry* and intend to do later on for that of the « fine gentlemen, » we must limit our analysis of the manners and customs of the *cavalier* times to taking examples almost exclusively from old French life.

The world of France, always in old days mimicked by other nations, may very well by reason of this fact serve by itself to represent the distinctive social aspects which, under a gradual but constantly progressive degradation, have everywhere characterized modern life during the three last Centuries.

The Court of the Louvre, and subsequently that of Versailles, where little by little were elaborated the art of *gentilezza* (the gentle life) and the supreme refinement of vicious living, were in a special sense the scenes of the highest perfection of graceful manners. Elsewhere nothing beyond an insipid imitation at most was ever achieved.

That charm of bearing and finished coquetry of the

Sword which is a joint product of the old French courtesy and the light, easy lovemaking of later times, never existed, it must be once for all acknowledged, among the neighbouring Peoples to North and West and East. These remained throughout the Centuries condemned one and all to a mere cold, lifeleless counterfeit, — so unalterable are national types of character, resulting as they do from the special peculiarities of climate, foods and beverages. Germans, Swedes, Dutch, English, Swiss, all poeples in fact capable of the crime of mixing mustard with stewed fruits and serving the latter with roast meat (1), were but awkward imitators of the happy manners and alluring fashions of the French, which our Queens remodelled from time to time for us, now on Italian now on Spanish patterns.

In the lands of ponderous broadswords and dismal fogs, where reigns universally, as Heine used to say, the same rectangularity in every gesture, the same frigid look of pomposity on every face, which Dr. Scherr and his countryman the philosopher Schopenhauer themselves note as the mark of pedantry and dulness (2), elegance is absolutely

(1) « In the menu of the dinner there figured also a *compote* of raspberry jelly and mustard (ein Kompot aus Himbeeren-gelée und Senft), which was exquisite, if we are to believe what the guests said ».

(2) « The real mark of the German national character is heaviness. It comes out strikingly in their walk, their ways of being and acting, their language, their tales, their speeches, their writings, in their mode of understanding

lacking ; and yet in this quality is underlying an indispensible foundation of all gallant bearing. There is a general resemblance between the weapons, the fence, the corruption of manners and the attitude of women in these countries and in *la belle France*, and that is all.

A survival of the influence the Sword exercised in Barbarous ages over the women, of the primitive subservience of the latter to its dictates, is still visible in a certain something of servility that always clings to them, when once married and settled, whether in Berlin or in London, whether from hereditary predisposition or as a matter of duty. Wives both in Germany and in England show a sort of affected air of resignation, utterly inconsistent with true gallantry and even more incompatible with the keenness and frankness of Cavalier ways. This is why there have been no female rufflers, no female exponents of the Sword, on the banks of Thames or Spree.

These worthy Germans, whose « stolid, supercilious calm » Antoine de la Sale (1) speaks of, these dreamy swains whom the daughters of the mist, the *nixies*, the « Undines » of the waters,

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and thinking and quite specially in their style. » — SCHOPENHAUER. *Thoughts, Maxims and Fragments.* (French translation published by Germer-Baillière, Paris 1880).

(1) ANTOINE DE LA SALE. *Des anciens tournois et faictz d'armes* (Of the ancient Tourneys and Feats of Arms), published as a supplement to the book of Olivier de la Marche. (Willem) Paris 1872.

cajole and devour with peals of elfin laughter, were never made, it must be freely confessed, to practise civilized rules of gentle bearing, — any more than were the phlegmatic English, well represented by their own St. Keven, in whose hand the swallows used to lay and hatch their eggs (1).

Looking at a map of Europe, we may trace out the lines of delimitation bounding the regions of heavy sentimentality by following with the finger the frontiers dividing the wine-countries from those where beer, the national beverage of the primitive Teutons, is the habitual drink, which, Bismarck (2) declares, « makes men stupid, lazy and impotent ».

In lands where malt and hops are brewed, martial spirit is cold and chill, love is without enthusiasm, intoxication itself without merriment. « Strong beer, tobacco that stings the tongue, and a servant-wench in her Sunday finery ; those are the things I love ; » here speaks the true German spirit in *Faust*, its representative poem.

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(1) Keven, Kieven or Kewen. Giraldus. *Topography of Ireland*. Chateaubriand. *Essay on English Literature*.

(2) At dinner (at Saint-Avold) the Councillors express a fear lest their favourite beverage, beer, should run short. « That is no loss ; » exclaims Herr von Bismarck. « The excessive consumption of beer is deplorable. It makes men stupid, lazy and useless. It is responsible for the democratic nonsense spouted over the tavern tables. A good rye whiskey is very much better. » — Extract from Herr Moritz Busch's Book on Bismarck, Vol. I. p. 78 of the English edition, Macmillan, 1898.

The regular beer-districts, none of which have ever yet produced graceful courtesans like Marion de Lorme nor nimble swordsmen like Miramont, draw their lines of demarcation between the Muscovite States, the ancient Slavonic provinces, whether Hungarian or subject to Turkey, that alluring region of Italy that embraces the plains of Lombardy and Venetia, and France, all jocund with her grape-clusters, — « that pleasant land, » as the gallant Mary Queen of Scots called it the day she quitted it so reluctantly.

« The Princes and nobles of Germany », — Koberstein (1) wrote in his *History of German Literature*, « following the general tendency of the last Century, thought of nothing any more but imitating in their own persons the habits and fashions of France, » — but without ever really succeeding in reproducing them. The English traveller Wraxall describes how the German youth, on their return from Paris, brought back only the follies and foibles of Frenchmen, being quite incapable of copying their « politeness, vivacity and grace ».

The constant effort on the part of their German neighbours to copy the various French excellencies is recognized likewise by the learned D[r] Scherr, in his book on Society in Germany : « It was

(1) *Historical Manual of the National German Literature* by Aug. Koberstein, Master at the Royal School of Pforta, in Saxony.

in the South of France, » he writes, « that first arose, — and on this all are agreed, — habits of polite and agreeable intercourse with the gentler sex. The Provençal Troubadours made this the aim of a science of symbolism and gallantry, which the Crusades were presently to introduce into Germany.... Chivalry came to us from France. « Further on in the course of the same work we may read : « Nowadays everything must be French » (1), — such was the cry in 1689 of every German who took any thought for luxurious living. All this indisputable evidence proves the expediency of doing what we suggest, — taking that is France to represent Northern and Western Europe generally under the different aspects that have from time to time characterized modern civilization.

Caesar declared long ago that the Germans, many

(1) « The Germans have been reproached with imitating the French at one time, at another the English. But really this is quite the cleverest thing they could do, for reduced to their own resources they have absolutely not one single sensible suggestion to offer you. » — SCHOPENHAUER, *Thoughts and Maxims*.

« The foreigner exercises an irresistible attraction over us, and produces along with germs of civilizations those of ruin and corruption. In this way we learn to despise whatever is home-made.

« This charge I bring especially against German women who take as models the refuse of Parisian prostitutes and kept women. These they copy in their own toilettes, and for want of the instinct of elegance become their caricatures. » — Dr SCHERR. *Society and Manners in Germany*, — Author's Preface.

centuries behind the Latin races in culture, borrowed from the Gauls their habits of politeness (1); and almost ever since, in all matters of everyday life, France has given the North the ensample of « good form ».

In no country so well as in France has the art been understood of arranging a duel fairly, courteously sharing sun, wind and position, of getting over a girl or cajoling a pretty woman, paying her favours with a song or a serenade. « And this is why, » says Béroalde de Verville (2), the German dames love the French far better than these heavy louts of Germans, « who make love like a whipped cur, and never take the initiative », — as a witty Parisienne of more modern days has expressed it, one who felt the same antipathy to them as the late Mme d'Oberkirch.

It was from France Frederick the Great, *gross Fritz* as the author of Werther calls him in his letters, borrowed his clearest thoughts and the best of his literary achievements. This at any rate is what his fellow-worker Voltaire gives us to understand, who divulges some of the literary deficiencies of this very imperfectly educated Sovereign.

The Emperor Charles the Fifth used to say: « The Spaniards talk like braggarts, the Germans like

(1) « They are somewhat more polished than the rest of the Germans, owing to the neighbourhood of the Gauls, whose manners and customs they have adopted ». — Caesar *Commentaries*, bk. IV.

(2) Béroald de Verville. *Le Moyen de parvenir*.

waggoners, the English like tame noodles, but the French like princes ».

To have a German look was, if we may believe Saint-Simon, a serious breach of elegance at the Court of Versailles. It was still just the same at Coblentz at the end of the XVIIIth. Century, — a fact which an exasperated critic of the time, Frederick Laukhard, confirms. « There is not left in that place », he declares, « a girl of 12 years old still virgin; the cursed Frenchmen coo so softly all men must blush at the results of their allurements. Girls, women, old and pious dames even, are intolerably given up to gallantry. » To conclude, we find Napoleon's apothecary writing in his Notes about 1806; « Nothing can well be more complaisant or more loving than German women; they adore the French ». Plenty more witnesses attest how the French have always been preferred by way of contrast, in the land of insipid *delicatessen* (affected compliments) and lachrymose lovers. These would wend in olden days to the Court of Berlin perched on metaphorical stilts, and in sheer languor of spirit would show themselves in as ludicrous a light as did Ulrich von Lichtenstein, who about 1224, out of some sentimental whim, disguised himself as the Goddess of lubricity.

A nation that has produced Schopenhauer is of a surety not intended by Nature for gallantry, or even for any agreeable form of dissoluteness. This Prussian satirist has expressed himself to the following effect in reference to women, « The intelligence of

mankind,» he writes, « must indeed have been obscured by love for them, ever to have given the name of the *fair sex*, the *beautiful sex*, to these creatures of puny stature, narrow shoulders, wide hips and *short legs* ». A phrase like this may be described as showing a want of tact. A woman will allow herself to be told: — You belong to a sex possessing a small brain and a half-developed organization; your disposition and instincts are all disproportionate, inconsequent, hypocritical, illogical and futile ; your moral sense is deformed, your selfishness without a scruple and your vanity without a limit. All this will hardly so much as annoy her; *but* dare to say, — You have *short legs*, and you have committed a dire offence woman's nature can never forgive. Further on, Schopenhauer adds another curiously insulting passage, — The Ancients, he says, would have laughed at « our gallantry of the old French fashion and our stupid veneration for *number two of the human species* ; a veneration which is merely», he goes on, « the most perfect realization of German-Christian silliness. » Such are the harsh words of this celebrated exponent of the pessimistic philosophy, which in connexion with our previous observations as to Germanic heaviness and awkwardness, will convince us that so far as the elegant and alert manners characteristic of the last two Centuries are concerned, we have nothing to learn from the Germans.

From the same point of view, little needs be said of the « tall lads », the young men of sea-girt England,

whom the Roman invasion found painted with blue so late as in the days of Caesar (1), — though they too, Milton is our authority for the statement, have always since Edward the Confessor cherished the idea and fond ambition of following French fashions, first and foremost desiring, if it might be, to speak French and no other tongue (2). They have borrowed from France their motto and their National Anthem (3) but never yet have they succeeded in catching our

(1) The Britons all stain the body a blue colour...— CAESAR. *Commentaries*, bk, V. ch. 3.

(2) CHATEAUBRIAND. *Essay on English Literature*, quotes an ancient couplet,

> French use this gentleman,
> And never English can.

In the same work,

> Il est sage, biaux et courtois
> Et gentiel hom de pan françois.
> Miex valt sa parole françoise
> Que de Glocester la ricoise.

He is wise, serviceable and courteous, gentle too, a true Frenchman. Better by far is his French speech than Gloucester's gabblement).

And again,

> Seïex de bouere et courtois.
> Et sachez bien parler françois.

(Be of good bearing and courteous, and know right well how to speak French).

(3) «It is as matter of common knowledge that the air and words of « *God save the King* » are of French origin. When the most Christian King entered the Chapel Royal, the whole choir of the aforesaid noble damsels used to sing each time

happy ways and tricks of manner whether among gallants, cavaliers or mere men of pleasure. Lord Chesterfield is never weary in his Letters to his son of exhorting the latter to imitate the French, as a means of rubbing off the Cambridge rust (1).

The French King John, a love-lorn prisoner in England in the best days of the genuine *swordsmen*, and at a much later period the elegant Chevalier de Grammont, offered the nobility of Windsor and St. James's perfect examples of the fascinating manners of their country. In olden times among the nation that practises the unceremonious *shake-hands*, and where not so very long ago the common man would sell his wife for a guinea, before the days when *perfect gentlemen* had adopted the habit of driving away the lady guests from table before the dessert, such a thing as this was possible, a festival at which sixty English maidens leading in a leash like greyhounds each a

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the following words to a very fine air composed by the Sieur Lully :

Grand Dieu, sauvez le Roy !
Grand Dieu, vengez le Roy !
Vive le Roy !
Que toujours glorieux,
Louis victorieux
Voye ses ennemis
Toujours soumis !
Grand Dieu, sauvez le Roy !
Grand Dieu, vengez le Roy !
Vive le Roy !

— *Souvenirs of the Marquise de Créquy*, vol. I.

(1) *Letters of Lord Chesterfield* to his son Philip Stanhope.

love-sick Knight decorated with French mottoes. There likewise, in that land of airy visions and the Queen of the Fairies, women have little by little lost their old prestige. I dare not here repeat what Lord Byron said of « young ladies » (1).

The descendants of Hengist and Horsa nowadays prefer their horses to the golden-haired *misses* of Albion, whose tender hands they roughly wring and shake up and down by way of salutation. And yet, in virtue of their very real charms, the blonde island beauties deserve a greater gentleness and courtesy, for be it said without offence to the German Lorelei, the misty nymph of the Rhine, they are, in comparison with some Northern types, in the matter of gracefulness and above all elegant walk, what the swan is to the domestic goose.

In spite of the very real physical advantages of the English race with its complexion blent of the white carnation and the rose, yet the easy bearing of the true lady's man in fashion and *flirtation* hardly ever flourished in old days beyond the Channel except as a hot-house exotic, in other words in the small

(1) Lord Byron, writing to one of his friends: « Now think of the position of women under the ancient Greeks, — suitable enough. Present condition : a relic of the feudal barbarity of the Middle Ages, — artificial and contrary to Nature. They should busy themselves with domestic matters ; we should feed them well, and dress them well, but never bring them in contact with society. They should, again, be taught religion, but should know nothing of poetry or politics; their reading ought to be confined to books of devotion and cookery... »

world of the chosen few, and not always even there.

In 1716 the Princess Palatine, with that treacherous gentleness women practise towards one another, — every woman instinctively hates every other, indeed the old Saxons made it part of women's duty to exercise a mutual surveillance over each other (1), — was delighted to record how Lady Sandwich, wife of the ambassador of William III, at the Court of Louis XIV. (2), had been styled by the latter Monarch on account of her quaint way of dressing her hair *the English ape*, which would seem to imply some inferiority at that epoch in Britannic grace and elegance.

It is then in virtue of a time-honoured supremacy enjoyed by France in matters of breeding and fashion that in the next chapter we shall select that country, though now and again incidentally citing some mode of Spain or Italy, as the main source from which to draw the special characteristics of the genuine *cavalier*-type of 1620 and thereabouts.

(1) « Before Charlemagne, the honour of families among the ancient Saxons was under the guard of women, who had the right of administering justice among themselves. Nothing can well be conceived more harsh and more implacable. »

(2) « An unknown lady, a sort of English *monkey* (appears at Court), wearing a little, low head-dress; in a moment the Princesses fly from one extreme to the other. » The *monkey* was Lady Sandwich, wife of the English ambassador. *Correspondance of the Duchesse d'Orléans* (the Princess Palatine), mother of the Regent.

Monkey was applied to signify a ridiculous looking person, ugly or ill dressed.

CHAPTER IX

The Cavalier pure and simple. — Coxcombs and Swaggerers, Swashbucklers and Rapier-Men.

We have now come to the last stage of the gay and ever attractive gallantry of the Sword, which never failed amid the vicissitudes of its unavowable and compromising intrigues to preserve to the very end some vestige of chivalrous habits. The *gentleman*, « gallant at all points, the heart excepted » (1), yet continuing to wear in his hat a silken stocking or a glove (2) belonging to his mistress of the hour, is

(1) Voiture. *Letter* 23. — Richelet's. *Dictionary*.

(2) In the *Contes de la reine de Navarre*, an English nobleman wears as a *favour* in his hat a glove belonging to his mistress.

In the *Dialogue des devises d'armes et d'amours* (Dialogue concerning Mottoes and Devices of Love and Arms) by Paulus Jovius, the author says, mentioning a motto : « As was that of the bold soldier (not to say *bravo*) Sebastien du Mancin, the more that at that period it was still an honoured name among the swordsmen; who was wont to wear in his cap the sole of a tiny shoe, with the letter T in the middle, and a great pearl at the end of the said sole, — intending by this that men should gather the name of his lady, after this wise, *Margherita, te sola di cor' amo* (Marguerite, — Pearl, thee alone in my heart I love).

In the civil wars M. de Châtillon, lover of Mlle de Guerchi,

succeeded by the *cavalier*, bearing all the characteristics of a new and altered age.

Pasquier writes in his book *Of the Origin of Words* « of *chevalier* (knight) we have made *cavalier*, » and the ladies might with truth claim to have done the same. The word *cavalier* (1), whence we get the significant expression *To treat cavalierly*, summed up in its original acceptation for the female world of France, which was the social model to the rest of Europe, the ideal of all that was charming, of the « supreme mould of gallantry » in modes of speaking and making love.

Simultaneously with the new *cavalier* manners which steadily extended their empire and acquired an exclusive pre-eminence from Madrid to Paris and from Naples to Rome, — for beyond the Rhine, the bounds of the old province of Artois and the English Channel, the part of *cavalier*, we repeat it once again is no better played than was that of *gallant*, — there appear in the world of fashion the same fair and slim-waisted swaggerers, the same high-born coquettes as those who in their mothers' and grandmothers' days used to call Henri IV. by the name of « le Capitaine Bon-Vouloir », or who would beg some

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was to be seen in battle wearing one of the lady's garters tied round his arm. — Tallemant des Réaux. *Historiettes.*

(1) *Cavalier*, a gentleman of birth who carries a sword. Is said also of a gallant who courts, who escorts a lady... The same word is likewise used as an adjective, signifying free, easy unconcerned... Used also of anything *too* free, verging on incivility. » — Trévoux's. *Dictionary*, 1743.

gentle bully to kill them a man with as little compunction as if he had been a woodcock.

The *cavalier*, in the old meaning of the word, that is not as signifying a *horseman* or a pupil of the Academy of Pluvinel skilled in making his horse sidle and curvet gracefully across the riding-school, but rather the coxcombical exquisite, « scenting the place with his musky odours, » of a later time, always preserved in spite of his insolent bearing some show of old-fashioned gallantry. « We were then (about the year 1625) at leisure in our garrison, » writes a gentleman of fashion, « and having nothing to do, we must needs bestow it on the ladies....» He proceeds, « I was at the time wearing grey and white, for love of one of them, whose servant I was, *when I had leisure.* » This is a fair example of the free and easy tone generally characteristic of the affected, artificial love-making of the period when the sword after unlimited exaggeration of size and pretensions, is soon to descend by degrees to quite insignificant proportions.

In the XVIIth. Century, « the effeminate nobility grows indolent, pays no heed to arms, and devotes itself to all sorts of debauchery. » is the statement of Vulson de La Colombière in his *Théâtre d'honneur* (Theatre of Honour).

Then it is the *Cavalier*, as represented under his boldly salient aspects in the French works of Rubens, Van Dyck and Philippe de Champaigne, offers the most distinctive and characteristic type, — one which under new fashions is presently reproduced afresh by

the young nobles of the Sword and the wandering rufflers and braggadocios of the time.

Among *cavaliers* are to be counted men of « good bearing » in France, Spain and Italy ; *coxcombs* (1) dressed out in particoloured satin, affecting the dainty wear of lace collars and perfumed gloves, with *Lady-killer* ruffs, gilt spurs, dancing plume and pearl ear-rings, carrying a Dutch tulip or a handkerchief of Brabant point in their hands, « or beating their boot with a switch. »

Among *cavaliers* are all the folk of riding-hood and sword, men of adventure in fight and love, whose pockets hold « a pack of cards, a set of dice and their little flute to make merry cheer withal ». — fencers, pickers of quarrels, braggarts with their insolent looks and well-drawn hose, « their fingers playing on the pommel of their rapier », such as Callot, Abraham Bosse Quevedo and the Sieur Auvray (2) have drawn and pictured them.

To the same category belong the dandies or *marjolets*, « posers and vapourers », *padas* throwing per-

(1) « *Coxcombs* is the term applied to a certain swarm of young men of the Court who claim the ascendant over the rest and make it their business to master everybody by their free and domineering ways.... The true coxomb makes a point of seeming yet more disorderly than he really is ; he talks much, and scarcely thinks at all.»

« *Coxcombs* are young men who pose as being in quest of adventures with ladies.. The coxcomb never goes in a straight line ; that is too *common* for him ». — Furetière's *Dictionary*, under Maistre.

(2) Sieur Auvray and Gombaud. *Epigrams*. Paris, 1657.

fumes and flovers to the ladies as they pass (1) *hidalgos* (noblemen, literally *sons of somebody*), *valentones* (braggarts), *diestros* (keen swordsmen), *matamores* or bullies, captains and *slitters of noses* who with arms a-kimbo, with « terror inspiring stare », stiff back and straightened leg, wear their moustaches curled and twisted to the eyes (2), their sword high tilted, sometimes carried without scabbard (3), lifting in the Spanish mode the edge of mantle or great-cloak.

Mme d'Aulnoy, in the reign of Charles II (of Spain), has given us a description of the costume of « a genuine Guap » (*guapo* or gallant), a term synonymous in the Spain of that day with braggadocio and *cavalier*, one of the formidable fellows whose rapiers with deep capacious basket-hilt, — big enough to drink one's soup out of, in the phrase of an old satirist, — were of such exaggerated length of blade that they had to be carried in a special scabbard opening half way down with a spring that the wearer might be able to draw his weapon (4).

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(1) Mme d'Aulnoy. *Voyage d'Espagne*, vol. III.

(2) *El bigote al ojo aunque no haya un cuarto.* (Moustachios curled up to the eyes, though he have not a cent). — Quevedo. *Obras escogidas* (Select Works).

(3) « Hat turned up behind, with a scallopped ruff round the neck, their swords very often without scabbard, merely suspended by a cord. » — Mme d'Aulnoy, *Voyage d'Espagne*, vol. I.

(4) *Guapo*, « Gallant, Cavalier ». — « And being a Guap, he had his cloak twisted around his arm, because this is more gallant, with a *broquel* in his hand; this is

Northerners, as already pointed out, were bound to be heavy and awkward to a degree in their parody of the ruffling, love-making fashions France borrowed from Spain, no less than of the native French way of lightly and gracefully carrying a pretty woman on the crupper, a practice common enough in Paris before the introduction of coaches.

Gentle and noble manners need the sun, like flowers; and their foggy sky, the source of so much evil influence on the German peoples, never suffered the latter to really imitate the gay habits of the gallants and cavaliers of a happier land. Undoubtedly it is something, — but it is by no means everything, to bring into the world like Augustus II., King of Saxony, three hundred and fifty four natural children.

We have now, for the earlier portion of the cavalier epoch strictly so called, to mark the very special and notable appearance of the exaggerated long-sword, and this in spite of regulations and repeated edicts to restrain its use. It is only in these days of

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a sort of buckler, very light and having a steel point in the middle ; they carry it at night when they go forth for adventures, good or bad. In the other hand he held a sword exceeding a half-pike in length, and the iron in its guard would have sufficed to make a small breast-plate. As these swords are so long a man could not draw them from the scabbard, unless he had been a giant, the scabbard opens on pressing the finger on a little spring ». — Mme D'AULNOY, *Voyage d'Espagne*, vol. II.

Spanish cavaliers (about 1550) used to gather up their cloak under the left arm. — BLAISE DE VIGENÈRE *Annotations sur Tite-Live.*

« swash-bucklers and rapier-men » that we find ironical nick-names applied to the noble weapon, now become the special attribute of grotesque and disorderly bullies. Henceforth it calls up the idea of wild pranks, ambiguous intrigues and extravagant enterprises. The Italians name it contemptuously *Spadaccia,* because of its absurd length of blade. In France, towards 1602, satire and ridicule unite in assailing the swaggerers of the sword. Montboucher (1) speaks of « their swords seven foot long, a sort of half-pikes, that they may fight it out at longer range. » These long swords were especially characteristic of the *matamores* or bullies, rivals of Fracasse and *Spavento*, whose Southern vapourings relieve the melancholy periods of mourning when all donned garments of black materials and weapons of steel blued to a « sombre tint ».

No doubt the graceful braggadocio of the Sword which characterizes the XVIIth. Century really amounts to little ; still if the rapier, that was always a disturbing element with its noisy and agressive self-assertion, had not made some relief by its bold, disorderly escapades in the general life of the day, how sad and dreary must have been the general aspect of that period of grim executions and fierce party

(1) Montboucher, Sieur de la Rivaudière. *Traité des cérémonies à gages de bataille et combats en champ clos, selon les institutions de Philippe de France.* (Treatise dealing with the Ceremonies connected with Wagers of Battle and Combats in the Lists, according to the Regulations of Philip of France), Paris, 1602.

struggles, in spite of all its *vaudevilles*, its active warfare of songs and ballads, its lampoons against the great Mazarin, its poets and its great men !

Without the Sword, the Spanish type of the *alumbrado* (man intoxicate with love), the guitar-playing lover who pursues every woman, be she who she may, the Don Juan of the time, that easily pleased seducer of the *thousand and three*, — the hero of rapid conquests, who is equally ready at a moment's notice to carry by assault noble ladies' hearts or to rumple a pretty chambermaid's neck-kerchief, — without the Sword such a type is impossible, and at this epoch women would have no other. — « This is why, following the same turn of mind, » says the old Spanish refrain, « a married woman's first thought and care is to devise how to be a widow ». (1)

Mme. d'Aulnoy recorded in 1679 : « A few days ago I was visiting the Marquise d'Alcañizas, one of the greatest ladies and most virtuous women of the Spanish Court. She said to us all openly, speaking of love, — I tell you frankly, if a cavalier had been half an hour alone with me without asking me to grant all a man can ask of a woman, I should feel so lively a resentment against him that I would stab him, if I could. » Mme d'Aulnoy adds : « Few women but hold the like views on this point.»

If women of birth and high family thought and spoke thus in the chivalrous land of Don Quixote, what must not have been the thoughts, words and

(1) Brantôme, *Dames galantes*, Fourth Discourse.

works of contemporary beauties of easy virtue? — the *bizarras* (1) (gallant women), for instance, as they were called at Madrid, where there were more than sixty thousand in 1612, the frail charmers who publicly practised the arts of gay caprice and gallant effrontery.

Such was the part which ladies of ease and leisure assigned as a rule to *cavalier* advances, thus forcing on their aspirants the enervating habit of facile pleasures, and making them as a consequence of progressive enfeeblement more and more apprehensive of muscular fatigues.

An edict of Louis XIII. in 1628 ordered all gentlemen of birth, under pain of loss of rank, to wear for the future defensive armour (2) in the field. The edict in question and the regulations supplementing it produced no visible effect.

Long before this date the sword of battles, « all rusty with old Gothic blood, » is buried deep amid its victories. » The rapier of the day, instrument of the ruffler's and bully's triumphs, the weapon of Cyrano de Bergerac and the d'Artagnans, grows constantly more and more slender. More than ever is it the indispensible accompaniment of the light intrigues that relieve the monotony of war; and by its prestige the cavalier stirs the hearts even of the country dames amid the homage the latter loved to pay, for want of

(1) Aarshns von Sommerdyck, *Travels in Spain*, 1665.

(2) Daniel, *Histoire de la Milice françoise*, (History of French Armaments),... Amsterdam, 1724. Vol. VI, ch. i.

a better object, to their ever complaisant patron, Saint Guignolet (1).

Cardinal Richelieu, after having donned a Captain's accoutrements at the siege of Rochelle, invariably takes up the sword when he goes love-making ; while the very Devil himself wears a long blade to dazzle the girls, as was stated in evidence about the year 1640 in a criminal process directed against a young witch-wife of Verberie (2).

Heart and soul devoted to «the flesh and the devil », when the highest praise a cavalier could receive was. « He dances well ! He is a handsome man ! He has a fine leg ! » — all the world of gentlemen and lovers is

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(1) « His falchion (the sword of Roland), which the chroniclers call his good sword Durandal, was conveyed to the Church of Our Lady of Roquamadour or the Rock of Saint-Amadour. It is related that Roland, visiting this chapel one day, presented to the Virgin as much silver as equalled the weight of his falchion. It is no doubt on this account the said falchion was attributed to Our Lady of Rocamadour. It was lost during the wars of the League ; and the priests replaced it by a heavy mass of iron, which continued to be known as Roland's sword. The women of the district used to go on pilgrimage to touch this falchion, to procure fertility. »

(2) « Jeanne Herviller, of Verberie, near Compiègne, who was condemned, as her mother had been before her, to be burned alive, by judgement of the Parliament of Paris, confessed that her mother had presented her to the Devil under the form of a tall man, black and dressed in black booted and spurred, with a sword by his side and a black horse at the door. » — P. L. Jacob. *Curiosités de l'histoire des croyances populaires.* (Historical Curiosities of Popular Belief).

openly and avowedly the slave of ladies of the Sword in close alliance with the young nobles of the *Fronde*, of women of politics and of scholarly or scribbling ladies reared at the same school of manners at which Julie d'Angennes learned to glean the flowers of her literary garland.

Notwithstanding all the bluster wielders of the rapier then affected, we may assert that never at any epoch was the debilitating action of licentious practices and sentimental follies more evident in its ill effects upon the Sword.

In the days of the wits, when Gombaud « as the Endymion of the wrinkled Marie de Médicis », the Infanta Anne of Austria, imposed the fine manners and fashions of Spain on the swordsmen of France, who still felt the effects of an earlier Italian influence. Women with epistolary ambitions, ladies in quest of fine-drawn ideas or the pathos of palpitating actualities, now set themselves to play upon the romantic string in the already enervated youth of the Sword. Love in its progresive weakness is marked by excessive finical affectedness, and language follows suit, under the auspices of the fine ladies, those creatures of moods and vapours, who compromise the cavaliers of high life and even the nobility of battle.

At the period which saw the martial triumphs of the hero of Rocroy, the great Condé, who wept and fainted on quitting Mlle. de Vigean (1) to join his

(1) « The great Condé was unable to say farewell to Mlle. de Vigean without bursting into tears ; and on

army in the field, a lover was said, in the fantastic diction of ladies always in search of startling contrasts, «to be *dying* for his mistress, » while in Spain they spoke of a *derretido* (a man *melting* with love) (1). Judging by the *abandon* of these expressions, we may gauge the effect produced on the younger cavaliers, in other words on the aristocracy of that time, by the influence of coquettes who in accordance with the mode of the day used to write to their lovers in this strain : « I cannot recall I have yet suffered you to write to me; I could not endure that you should speak to me. »

Nothing can well be more incongruous in the midst of the disorders of the cavalier life of the time than these insipid affectations, these inimitable *preciosities*. The Dandies of the day throw themselves madly into the pursuit of alchemy in conjunction with rogues of flattering tongue or perhaps with adventuresses in search of the Philosopher's stone and expert in the arts of cajolery and deceit, and refuse their approval under any circumstances to the new-fangled sentimental, metaphysical love, in hopes of reclaiming their mistresses to the old tenderness of an earlier epoch.

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starting for his last expedition into Germany (from which he brought back the victory of Nordlingen), he fainted away on the occasion of quitting her side. « — *Memoirs*, vols. I p. 85. — Villemain. *La société française au XVII*e *siècle*. (French Society in the XVIIth. Century), vol. I.

(1) Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes*, — *Le marquis de Rouillac*.

The more distinguished, the more superior, among the fine ladies, those, « who in walking swing the hips in the Spanish fashion », those who to gratify their vanity made their sucessful lovers fight under their windows with the disappointed suitors, had striven to establish as a principle that « love is not a mere passion pure and simple, but a passion of necessity and polite obligation ; it behoves every man to be in love, and every woman to be loved. » « No man, » say they, « ought to be without love and without a mistress. » All this tended to set up a species of obligatory service as due to all women alike.

In spite of these pretensions, pretensions stimulated by the vogue enjoyed by the map of the *Pays du Tendre* (Land of Love), — a silly topographical inanity brought into notice again by Mlle. de Scudery, nothing can really bring back the old illusions and loving trust of an earlier day, even among such *cavaliers* and doughty knights as have undergone a preliminary sophistication at the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Into that home of culture, as a result of the disappointments and unsatisfied caprices of the literary ladies, poetic creatures of the most superfine sensibility, left neglected by the gentlemen of their circle who are weary of their affectations and refuse to meet their advances, had already slipped sundry unpolished, *bourgeois* recruits like Voiture, who wanting one day to warm his feet made no ado about taking off his shoes in the Princess's presence.

After the Court, the most effectual instrument of perversion acting on the Sword was the world of the

salons. « It may truly be said », writes Tallemant des Réaux in his *Historiettes*, « that Mme. de Rohan was one of the first and foremost to cause young men to lose the respect they formerly accorded to ladies ; for to induce them to frequent her house constantly, she allowed them to take all conceivable liberties ».

All true respect for women having thus little by little faded away, men of birth in their turn are now threatened with the loss of what is left of their old prestige. The jealousy of the Gown, constantly on the look out to injure the Sword, had suddenly unmasked its batteries of hatred and ill-will, and Laffemas (1) a creature of Richelieu's, dares to have great Lords beheaded. The Duc de Boutteville in 1627 lost his head simply for having fought a duel in defiance of the prohibitions of the Royal edicts. This event, its may be said without exaggeration, was the prologue leading up by inevitable stages to the tragic finale consummated in 1793.

(1) « Laffemas is held to have been a sort of wholesale executioner and assassin. But it must be remembered he lived in a century when putting a nobleman to death was a thing unknown, and Cardinal Richelieu made use of him to give his first examples of its possibility. » — Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes*, — 265, Laffemas.

CHAPTER X

The Cavalier grown disreputable. — Increasing contempt for women. Unnatural vice.

During the flourishing period of *Cavalier* elegance, in the days when Cinq-Mars possessed three hundred pairs of boots, the majority of the lovelaces of the world of fashion, described as « apostates from good feeling», take to smoking tobacco and getting drunk. They lisp in speaking, frequent ill-reputed quarters of the town, gaming-houses and resorts of doubtful characters, cheat at cards (1), are swindled and robbed themselves, and snap their fingers at love. A large proportion revolt against all such claims, and defy the ladies, whom at the same time, with an affectation of the greatest politeness, they salute with bows to the very ground « in reverences two-storeys deep ». The less corrupt, or at any rate such as wish to stand well with public opinion, exhaust themselves in flattering madrigals addressed to the fantastical fine ladies of high life or the Philamintas of the demi-monde. They beg for their heart's love in a set of verses, but says Saint-Évremond, « they find much more pleasure in publishing abroad

(1) Hamilton. *Memoirs of the Comte de Grammont.*

the favours their mistresses have conceded than in receiving them. »

Towards the end of the same period a sermon of the Père de la Rue, attacking the vices of the time, insists strongly on their influence « towards the enfeeblement of the military virtues by the corruption produced among young men. »

Subsequently to the printing of the outspoken memoirs of Sully, no vestige of real sincerity, to speak generally, — and always excepting Tallemant des Réaux and Rabutin, — is to be found in the descriptions of French morality. The truth comes out only in the plain-speaking denunciations of the preachers.

Men of letters in the XVIIth. Century, living as they did almost invariably in Paris at the expense of their noble patrons, great lords and ladies, who lodged and pensioned them (1), could hardly be expected, — not to mention the fact that they were subject to the Royal censorship, — to be anything but panegyrists of the Court and Society of their day. This accounts for the complaisant falsehoods published at this period, the false delicacy and pruderies of the romances and long-winded tales and

(1) Not to go further back than the reign of Henri III., I cannot see that Poetry has any reason to blame the Court, nor yet that M. Desportes is the only one who received advantage from it. The Court has before now made poets Cardinals, and poets Bishops, M. du Perron and M. Bertaut. It gave the Pastor Fido (Nicolas des Iveteaux, died 1649) of the Faubourg Saint-Germain delicious gar-

the utterly fallacious ideas these have given currency to.

Books written from the time of Richelieu down to the *Fronde* as a rule represent the aristocracy of the period generally as summing up all that was most gentle and most honourable under the sun. But really as a matter of fact the *cavaliers* were in the highest degree depraved, while the women of this corrupt society had reached a point of absolute unbearableness in their glozing phraseology, their novel tricks and cajoleries and their falsity of heart.

They put on exaggerated airs of mock-modesty, and assume a scornful pose before their admirers,

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dens, where he passed an easy and protracted old age. Coming down to our own century, we find it to have established M. Godeau, with a mitre,

« Aux bords des derniers flots où Thetis se couronne
D'un bouquet d'oranger. »

— « On the shores of the remotest waves where Thetis crowns her head with a wreath of orange-blossom ».

By Court influence we find « friend Metellus » (Métel de Boisrobert, abbé of Châtillon) made an Abbé ; Monsieur Chapelain gratified with handsome appointments ; Corneille, a gentleman with two thousand crowns annually ; Voiture, Councillor of State, master of the King's household, introducer of foreign Ambassadors, Clerk to the Superintendant of Finance, with more titles than the Getic, Vandalic, Germanic ones of the old Emperors, more than even the King of Spain. » — *Letters* of the poet Sarrasin, quoted in Villemain. *French Society in the XVIIth. Century*, vol. II. Appendix.

all the time longing at all costs to be paid court to.

By virtue of suchlike hypocrisies, matching well with the mask women still wore, this period so full of extravagancies and contradictions passes with present-day historians as having possessed every merit and every virtue. But there is a reverse to this sham medal gilt only on one surface, for plenty of foul meannesses are to be found in the back-scenes of the great comedy of *Cavalier* life amid all the superabundance of dainty words. The illusion still subsists among contemporary writers of optimistic views who have read Mlle. de Scudéry's *Clélie ;* but if between the years 1615 and 1699, we analyze a little what these authors delight in extolling, the inexactitude of their insight into the manners of the time is very soon apparent. During this vaunted period, « the ease with which women's favours could be won, — (as well as their universal want of cleanliness (1),— had made their charms so contemptible in the eyes of young men that no one at Court any longer so much as thought of looking at them. » This is what Bussy-Rabutin (2) declares, at the same time accusing

(1) In the XVIth. Century, in spite of the immoderate use already made of perfumes, women were by no means always sufficiently washed. In a love dialogue in the *Contes* of Marguerite de Navarre, a lady avows « without any shame that she has not cleansed her hands » for a week. — *Les Lois de la galantrie française* (The Laws of French Gallantry 1644). This book is well worth consulting on the subject of this dirtiness in high life.

(2) Bussy-Rabutin, *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules.*

the *cavaliers* of his day of indulgence in unnatural vice, — a vice women usually condone with an inexplicable complacency.

As another proof of the general contempt women now inspired may be mentioned the rapid decrease, and eventually the entire suppression, of those symbols of admiration and flattery which did honour to their sex and their beauty, in olden days the objects of such fervent worship. These symbols, which for centuries had adorned everything, even down to the very busk of a lady's corset, totally disappeared in the course of a few years.

In the same way the wearing of love-favours and mottoes and the like agreeable practices hitherto usual in War, gradually cease. « Long live the King ! » replaces on sword-blades the old phrases of tenderness, as well as such martial lines as these :

« J'aime trois choses de bon cœur :
Les armes, l'amour et l'honneur ».

(Three things I love with all my heart, arms love and honour.)

Still more pronounced tokens mark the gradual decline, dating from the XIIIth. Century, of the high ideal of womanhood originally held.

In the ages of primitive Chivalry which made woman into a goddess, the motto of the Sword was ever, « God and my Lady ! » A little later a variant is found, « God and Fair Ladies ! » Here is the Gallantry of the senses already showing the point of its satyr's ear. Concurrently as licence increases, is God eclipsed

in the mottoes by Love ; while last of all Love itself disappears, giving place to the King. Watching these successive changes, accompanied as they were by greater and greater laxity of military honour and fealty we should be justified in saying that women while losing their own repute, have robbed the Sword one by one of each and all of its best beliefs.

In the golden age of Chivalric respect for women, lovers walking with their ladies used to support the latter with a hand under the arm. This protecting and loving gesture which is represented in old miniatures and tapestry, would seem to have ceased abruptly towards the middle of the XVth. Century. From that date onwards, monuments and other works of art invariably, whatever the subject may be, represent women clad as lightly as possible and posed in caressing attitudes, as much as to say to their male companions, « Don't go away ! »

Other observations of a different character prove that simultaneously with the decline and decrease of the Sword, the last fragments of feminine prestige fall of themselves like the walls of Jericho, — not that this in any way hindered the gallantries of the Renaissance period making a brave and vigorous show.

To return to the men of the sword of the XVIIth. Century. By force of habit they are still submissive to women's caprice; and adopt in love-making the new affected fashions prescribed by them, but while yielding obedience to their will, they are all the while far from granting them the high importance of an earlier day.

In the list of things to be desired by a true Cavalier, the lady-love no longer comes in the first line:

« Gloire, joie et santé parfaite,
Belle maîtresse et bon cheval ».

(Glory, joy and perfect health, a fair mistress and a good horse).

Such is the classification of wishes addressed by Dassoucy to the Duke of Savoy towards the middle of the XVIIth. Century.

So we see that a mistress then figured as part of the happiness of a nobleman no longer in the highest place, but only in the second, as a mere accessory, in the same rank as a good horse.

Without going into too minute and for that reason possibly unseemly details, it is easy to gather that gentlemen of the *cavalier* days set themselves deliberately to disdain, to slight the ladies, and even to abuse them, letting pamphleteers and preachers indulge in public invectives against them. Under Louis XIV., Bossuet and the Père de la Rue used in their sermons habitually to scold and insult the high-born ladies of literary pretentions and affectations.

Then, as we have seen above, were produced once again in the history of manners abnormal effects reversing all established principles of women's habits. The latter are eager to recall the old-fashioned love now turned into contempt; but it is too late. This fact they realize with grief and anger. Making trial of a method imported from Italy, they are for ever indulging in the *vapours*, and having as a last

resource grown prudish, though in words only, they merely succeed in becoming altogether insupportable, and are relegated to separate beds. In the Middle Ages one bed only sufficed for husband and wife ; but the habit of sleeping together will be found pretty generally pretermitted at this period among gentlefolks.

Italians of good birth and breeding, grown indifferent and, even more, discouraged, finally renounce their time-honoured jealousy. The greater part tolerate the *cicisbéo* as a part of family life, while some husbands, disgusted with women altogether, actually end by addressing to the Pope an abominable petition with a view to obtaining an authorization from him to have dealings with the other sex during the Summer (1). Among the Germans too the same kind of repugnance for all things feminine arises. As to the Spaniards, repentant of having ever invented the alcove, which at night brought them into the closest contact with their *better half*, they follow the practice of sleeping alone as much as possible.

Already public satires directed against coquettes grow more numerous and more bitter, but above all in the good town of Paris do epigrams dealing with their misdemeanours abound. Against, these manifest-

(1) « A similar petition had before this time been addressed to Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484), to gain permission to commit the offence against Nature during the months of oppressive summer heat. Sixtus wrote at the bottom of the petition : « Let it be done as desired by our petitioners ». — *History of France*, by the Abbé Velly, vol. V., p. 10.

ations of disfavour, so wounding to the sex and particularly to the more high-born members of it, the more important and respectable of them only set fresh extravagances, that display them in the effort to regain their influence over the sword by the institution of systematic immorality.

After being duellists, leaders of coteries and political intrigues, Captains or Major-Generals in the army of Mlle d'Orléans (1), and later conspirators of the opposition, in the days when the Duc de Beaufort proudly fascinates the tradeswomen of the Halles and Mme de Longueville takes military possession of the little town of Stenay, the ladies of France, always a model to the other women of Europe, set themselves to exert what is left of their influence on the crowd of cosmopolitan Bohemians and the ranks of men of looks, these latter already getting rare.

Thus the high born dames of fashion traverse in all their gallant bravery this « Vale of tears, » as the Scriptures call life.

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(1) « There was a Regiment raised under the name of *Mademoiselle's* troop, and Monsieur actually wrote to women who had followed his daughter to Orléans in these terms : To my lady Countesses, Major-Generalesses in my daughter's Army against Mazarin. » — Abbé Thomas. *Essai sur le caractère des femmes* (Essay on the Character of Women), 1771.

The highest and noblest Amazon in the World, the Empress of Austria, has just received (1881) a singular compliment and one of quite a feudal type, the Emperor of Russia having conferred on her the title of Honorary Colonel of a Regiment of Uhlans.

Giddily following their ambiguous mode of existence, hardly conscious of their true bearings, they pretty generally betake themselves at last to mere plunder and thievery, while their lovers, victims of indifference and lassitude, strike work for good and all, and the sword gets ever smaller and ever weaker.

Presently the nymphs of the final revels. Adriane, Dorille, Mélitée, Sylvanthe, Nérinde, Orinthie (1), those faded beauties, destined to have as descendants the *merveilleuses* of the libertine age, do like the fair lady of Saint-Eustache, who, so said the people, preferred the first comer as a lover.

Such is everywhere the behaviour of the greatest ladies, too clearly betraying their utter depravity of morals.

Mme de Chevreuse delights in hearing Boisrobert's filthy works read aloud, while the honourable and learned Christina of Sweden, whom Colbert was charged with the task of looking after for fear she should pilfer some valuable during her

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(1) Adriane, Dorille, Mélitée, Silvanthe, Nérinde and Orinthie, the Nymphs of the Revels of 1640. — Vulson de la Colombière, *Théâtre d'honneur et de chevalerie*, vol. IV.

Again in 1686 there was another sham feast of Chivalry, a *rococo* mascarade, known as the Revels of the gallant Moors, at which the most dancing-mad of all great kings of France figured. He was pleased to perform before the Court in the costume of Apollo or Alexander the Great with a flowing wig and naked limbs.

visit to the *palais Mazarin* (1), makes her young favourite, Mlle de Sparre, read out before Saumaise certain dirty French stories (2). It is well known how this stalwart and gallant Queen, after her debauches with Swedes and Spaniards of Brussels, had her ex-lover Monaldeschi (3) killed almost

(1) « The Queen of Sweden did not see Your Eminence's appartments in the Louvre..... If she had visited them, I should have endeavoured to prevent irregularities, as I did, with no little difficulty, in Your Eminence's Palace, albeit M. de la Bretesche, who was on guard with Her Majesty, did all I desired of him. » — *Lettres originales et Mémoires de Colbert au cardinal Mazarin.* (Original letters and Memoirs of Colbert to Cardinal Mazarin), Paris, 15 sept. 1656, Letter 130, p. 262, published by Pierre Clément, Paris, 1861.

(2) « During the time when Saumaise lay ill at the court of Sweden, Queen Christina who had induced him to visit that country, went to see him, and found him in bed and reading a book, which out of respect he closed the instant he saw her enter. She asked him what it was. He confessed it was a book of somewhat loose tales, which in the intervals of his sickness he was reading for amusement. « Ha, ha! » said the Queen; « come, let's see what it's like, show me one of the good places. » Saumaise having shown her one of the best, she first of all read it through to herself. smiling. Then, to afford herself still greater pleasure, she cried, addressing the beautiful Mlle Spare, her favourite, who understood French: « Look, Sparre, look what a charming book of devotion, called the *Moyen de parvenir!* Now, read me out that page aloud! »

(3) « Relation de la mort du marquis de Monaldeschy, Grand Écuyer de la Reine Christine de Suède, mis à mort par l'ordre de cette reine, le 10 novembre 1657, écrite par le Père Le Bel, ministre des Mathurins de Fontainebleau, qui fut seul témoin de cette exécution » (Account of the

before her very eyes at Fontainebleau. He had succeeded to the hard place of lover to that *exigeante* Princess in lieu of Magnus de la Garde, and had just been himself supplanted by François Sentinelli, who likewise soon had a series of successors.

In the following Century Catherine II. of Russia (a German Princess) showed no less depravity of character, but at any rate this latter was not cruel, for it is an ascertained fact that to maintain and support in luxury her sixteen principal lovers she expended four hundred and ninety one millions of francs (1), a sum representing more than a milliard (a thousand millions) of the money of our day.

In view of the behaviour and morals of these two Queens, the general conduct of the Swedish and Russian ladies of those days may be conjectured, at a period when their Sovereign was the undisputed arbiter of all feminine fashions and modes of life.

The morals of women in the XVIIth. Century, and this in spite of the praises lavished on them by the

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Marquis de Monaldeschi, Grand Equerry of Queen Christina of Sweden, put to death by order of the said Queen the 10th. November 1657, — written by Père le Bel, Minister of the Congregation of Mathurine Monks at Fontainebleau, who was the sole witness of the execution in question. » — Abbé Guilbert, *Description hist. de Fontainebleau* (Hictorical Description of Fontainebleau). Paris, 1731.

(1) Castéras, *Life of Catherine II.*

Masson, *Mémoires secrets sur la Russie* (Secret Memoirs of life in Russia.

great panegyrists of love, display in the midst of European civilization many other revolting particulars, and those of Frenchwomen among the first and foremost. Bayle writing from Rotterdam in 1695, à propos of a new book, says: « This work, as well as several others reaching us from France, gives us a strange picture of the Parisian ladies. These have grown, we are told, great drinkers of brandy and great takers of snuff, not to mention the other excesses they are accused of, such as gallantry, ill-natured backbiting and immodesty. They offend in « over-eating, the use of tobacco, hot cordials and too much wine », is the reiterated complaint of contemporary observers ; this will give some idea of the rest of their faults. At Stockholm, at Copenhagen, the « fair sex » copies and exaggerates the French vices. In Teutonic countries in the same Century noble German ladies of every age, girls and matrons alike, drink beer in bumpers to intoxication, give their favours by sheer wanton complaisance, or as a refined pastime, shoot at a mark. As to their fellow-countrywomen, merry dames of lower pretensions, they likewise, « living such ill lives it were impossible to be worse, » have by their profligate ways exerted a highly disastrous influence over the military character of their compatriots.

« Beyond the Rhine, » Sommerdyck writes in 1655 (1), « women get drunk almost as much as beyond the Pyrenees ». They do so much more, if we

(1) « I will say this, that in Germany I have not seen quite so many women who got drunk as I met on this side

are to credit the English Ambassador then resident in Prussia. Such is the behaviour of women generally in the XVIIth. century, from Madrid to Moscow.

Ladies of quality, such was the name given of old, in the days of « the empire of falbalas », to the fashionable women of high life, passed on, as they invariably do and as we have already several times noted, their vicious tastes and artificial manners to their *bourgeois* neighbours, who then proceeded to vulgarise and make ridiculous these habits and once becoming fashions. Cranes when they migrate, says Saint Jerome, always follow a leader crane that guides all the rest. And it is the same with women and their fashions.

In every town in Europe, the Cathos and Madelons with that pretentiousness and grotesque folly that is

the Pyrenees. » AARSENS VAN SOMMERDYCK, *Travels in Spain*, 1654.

In connexion with the drunken habits of ladies in the XVIIth. Century, habits which continued in fashion long after its termination, we will quote some passages from the letters of the Princess Palatine, the mother of the Regent. In a letter dated May 7. 1696, she says :

« My son's wife is a disgusting creature : she gets as drunk as a bellman three or four times a week ».

Later on, in a letter dated from Versailles, April 29. 1704, we read « Intoxication is only too much in fashion among young women. »

Lastly, Aug. 15. 1719, she writes, speaking of Mme de Parabère : « She would be very tolerable if she were not so much given over to drunkenness. »

characteristic of the class, made a point of mimicking, while envying all the while, the *fashionables*, Court favourites and great ladies ; just as these latter have invariably taken a delight, ever since from the days when St. Boniface rebuked them, in imitating the popular courtesans of the day.

Thus by a sort of contagion patrician dames made their *bourgeois* sisters arrogant and luxurious, « absurdly pretentious » and eventually immoral. As early as 1220, rich German ladies, at Mainz, entering into open competition with the fair charmers of the aristocracy, wore dresses with trains, in defiance of the reproaches the Preachers, who were not at all mealy-mouthed, directed against them from the pulpit.

The low moral tone of noble ladies in these days had the further evil of ruining by force of bad example not only the middle classes, but the lower orders as well.

« It is the chamber-maids that give the dogs fleas », was a significant phrase of the Sire de Canaples, brother to the Marquise de Créquy.

Thus in the XVIIth. Century do we find the moral sense of the men of the Sword more and more astray under the influence of the women of the period, dominated entirely as these are by pleasure and self interest. Married women of the magisterial and merchant classes, who were in France expressly forbidden by law to wear velvet or silk, but who nevertheless « are clothed like princesses », get money from whoever they can, always provided it is not their husbands, to

seduce and keep gallant musqueteers as their lovers, who but for that would have refused them flatly. « No more love without pay », say the lower type of rufflers of the day; their ideas are not bound by any very high standard, and they become in these days the avowed and accredited purveyors of sensual delights. To buy brave attire, « for lack of better, they put up with old women's superannuated charms ; » they sell lascivious dreams and sophisticated joys to garrison charmers, impatient wantons and uncomely but sturdy dames who have no longer either time or right to make difficulties.

« There is a class, » says La Bruyère, « of women who are past their prime and whom their idiosyncrasy and evil character make the regular resource of young men ill supplied with the world's goods ». « I really do not know which is the most to be pitied, » he goes on, « a woman of a certain age who needs a lover, or a man who needs a « superannuated mistress ». Brantôme had already in his time spoken in his *Dames galantes* of « the love of sundry ladies of ripe age ».

These shameful practices, so discreditable to the honour of the Sword, prevailing among the younger members of the military caste, recall the very ancient national song of Brittany known as the *Ann hani goz, — È va dous,* the words of which run thus, in a literal transation :

« I have an old woman for sweetheart,
My sweetheart is old for sure ;
Yet the while I am dreaming of a young maid I love.

The young maid is fair indeed,
But the old dame has money » (1)

Such is the way of the world of cavaliers and ruffling gallants ; it is still, and more than ever, true that between dashing dames of fashion and men of the rapier self-interest and pleasure are the two great bonds of union. These two baits never fail to catch the vast majority of the King's good soldiers, who keep garrison in country towns, where they find nothing in the way of amusement but intrigues or else downright debauchery. Their stay is the delight at once of mistresses and servant-maids, entranced by the dashing figures of the soldiers, their gay uniforms and military music. After all nothing can be more natural. To realize to-day the effect produced in old times, it is quite enough to watch the arrival of a squadron of cavalry or a regiment of the line in a small provincial town.

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(1) First couplet and refrain :

Ann hani goz
E va dous,
Ann hani goz eo sur.

Second couplet :

Ha coulsgoude ha pa sonjan,
Ann hani iaouank a garan.
(*Refrain*) Ann hani goz etc.

Third couplet :

Ann hani goz a deus arc'hant
Ann hani iaouank a zo koant.
(*Refrain*) Ann hani goz, etc.

Les Caquets de l'accouchée (Gossip of the Lying-in Room), 1623; « They are forced to make love to an old woman or to cajole the daughter of a rich house. Only base-born brats and seduced girls are to be found ».

The way the ladies, and all their maids and abigails, crowd the windows with open eyes, gives no bad idea of the attraction exercised in the times of gallant and handsome cavaliers by the swagger of men of the sword, flashing their dazzling blades so bravely in the sun.

« Une autre ville, une autre fille »

(Another town, another mistress)

are the words of a very old song. Thus was the heterogeneous admixture of races by selection carried on through the gallantries and intrigues of the sword, whose bastards were indeed held in relatively high esteem.

To suchlike scandalous circumstances did many a little *bourgeois* and peasant owe his birth, children whose good looks and delicate hands and feet betray the faults, or let us say the venial caprices, of their mothers.

Observe once more how women, who are always attracted by *ne'er-do-weels* and scamps (« in France a *mauvais sujet* is rather admired than otherwise »), preferred as a rule to an honest professional man or tradesman some red-coated Adonis with sword at side. The rapier indeed was, in imitation of the Spanish mode (1), worn with impunity

(1) « At the Assembly of the Estates at Paleccia, the Emperor Charles the Fifth, among other ordinances there promulgated, forbad any to appear masked in public, in order to deprive malefactors of the means of concealment ; at

down to 1660 by *scaramouches* and street braggarts, till it was at last forbidden by Royal edict to men of low birth. « A young man of middling condition, a Parisian, who never went abroad without a great sword at his side, made much play with the girls of his quarter and brought some of them into evil case, » relates Tallemant des Réaux. All the gay fellows, the Lotharios and the very lackeys, in Paris (1), in imitation of those of Madrid, carried the long sword ; only towards the end of the *cavalier* period they avoided, in consequence of a long-delayed edict of prohibition, passing over the Pont-Neuf, where the police-officers had orders to impound their weapon. The arm of nobles has indeed fallen low !

At the same time that Boileau is launching his invectives against women in his Discourses, Molière at his Sovereign's instigation dares to mock at the sword on the stage. It is now fallen on evil days, and he takes full advantage of the fact. A threat with the Great King's walking-stick was

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the same time leave was given to all persons to wear the sword, to the end that men of low estate might be able to defend themselves in case of attack ; but this privilege of the nobility granted to common people made the latter proud and idle... » — *Abrégé chron. de l'histoire d'Espagne et de Portugal* (Chronological Summary of the History of Spain and Portugal), vol. II. Paris, 1765.

(1) « A footman reklessly was for passing his sword through his body. » — Tallemant des Réaux. *Voiture*, notes p. 359. Ed. Techener.

to show it that under certain circumstances it could incur humiliation and even ridicule. Yet from the days of fabulous legend downwards any such supposition seemed utterly inadmissible, even when Mars lay caught like a fish in the net by Vulcan, the Georges Dandin of Olympus. Now, the confident pride of the aristocracy once troubled. the disappointed and chagrined swordsmen begin one fine day to visit the blame on the ladies.

From 1620 and onwards, there is perceptible, stirring the prefumed air of their dainty world, suspicions of the critical attitude, threats, even spurts of mocking laughter against women.

The XVIIth. Century, rough and cavalier in spite of all its high pretence of sentimental tenderness and its romances « lost in the paths and spaces of the moon », made good use of the birch, or to adopt the language of the period, caressed with the disciplinary switch, its dulcet dames, its affected *précieuses*. Queen's favourites and even Queens themselves, all submit, and occasionally, like the wife of Sganarelle, or the Egyptian lady in *Zadig*, they take a positive pleasure in being whacked. The number of those who endured such treatment is considerable. Mme. de Montbazon was all but beaten by d'Hocquincourt. and Buckingham boasted of having, in the quality of their lover, *drubbed* three Queens, the Queen of France being one.

Mme de Rohan, Tallemant des Réaux relates, always had the aspiration of being beaten by her lovers. « They say she liked it. » To be beaten is not a

privilege every women can command, the Marquise de Blainville would remark regretfully. Fashion having once sanctioned this pre-eminently *cavalier* way of treating ladies, Monsieur the King's brother by way of affording a good example, boxes Mlle de Beauvais' ears at a ball (1). It is notorious how M. de Lauzun ill-used Mademoiselle the King's eldest daughter, who later on was copied in certain forms of indulgence by the lascivious Duchesse de Berry, the same whom M. de Riom, lieutenant of Dragoons, compelled to pull off his boots.

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(1) « Le frère du Roy, l'autre jour,
Dans un certain bal de la Cour,
.....
Fit un parterre et se blessa,
Et, se relevant tout plein d'ire,
Il entendit hautement rire
Mademoiselle de Beauvais,
Ce qui lui parut si mauvais
Qu'il s'encourut soudain vers elle,
Et, sans respecter la pucelle,
Sur sa tendre joue appliqua
Un soufflet qui très fort claqua. »

The King's brother the other day, at a certain Court ball, ... fell and hurt himself; and getting up again full of vexation, he heard Mlle de Beauvais give a loud laugh. This seemed to him so ill-natured that he suddenly ran up to her, and losing all respect for the young girl, applied a blow to her tender cheek, that sounded clearly through the room.)

J. de Loret, *Muse historique : Recueil de lettres en vers écrites à Mlle de Longueville* (The Muse of History, — a Collection of Letters in Verse written to Mlle de Longueville.

What a contrast these coarse brutalities present to the old world tenderness of the graceful attentions of chivalrous and gallants days! Barely two centuries had elapsed since Gaston de Foix rode in the charge at Ravenna, « his arm bare for love of his fair lady... (1), and at his death was wearing a favour he had received of her ».

« Monsieur Chapelain », sighed Menage on coming out from seeing a representation of the *Précieuses*, « we shall be bound to destroy what we have hitherto adored! « This final expression of regret proclaims only too clearly the utter collapse of the fondest illusions of the past. Love on the men's side acquires a defiant, angry, exacting and capricious attitude. « By heaven! I must and will love you, » says Alceste masterfully to Célimene. A little more, and we may guess he would have beaten her.

« In the reign of Louis XIV., the constant state of War which lasted for twenty years did not stop a certain amount of love-making. But as the Court was filled with old unimpressionable cavaliers, or else

(1) « Now the aforesaid Sieur de Nemours was used, for the love of his lady fair, to wear (in battle) no harness. except his shirt, from the elbow down to the gauntlet. » (April 1512). — Fleurance. *Mémoires*.

« M. de Nemours, by reason of her great beauty was enamoured somewhat deeply (of the Duchesse of Ferrara), and used to wear her colours, grey and black, as the tale goes, and a *favour* which he had upon his person the day of the battle of Ravenna. » — Brantôme. *Discours sur les duels*.

with young men rendered brutal by their trade of arms... » the ladies, not to lack caresses altogether, grew as a rule compassionate to suitors and some utterly shameless. « All essayed to seduce the King. Failing success in that quarter, such as longed for sensual gratifications consoled themselves elsewhere, holding that in this respect the Sovereign might be replaced by some mean person of the lowest condition, one who could be readily changed on occasion. It was not long before they began to run after men, — the reason many scorned their charms altogether. » These are the words of a contemporary of the *dames précieuses*, who in conjunction with the youth of the Sword, gave the XVIIth. Century its most characteristic aspects.

The fact cannot but be recognized that at this date women in the domain of the senses have met with a check. Their design was to provoke a reaction, but in this they failed. Seeing this, the dandies of the day made it their boast to depreciate and belittle women, even before the latter had given them their first opportunity of knowing and compromising them.

Here is the point, that of the final degradation of the Sword as representative of the soldier, to have done with the *Cavalier* who is now to change his nature completely and degenerate into the weakling libertine pure and simple.

Through the fault of women of luxurious and self-indulgent life whose pleasure was to make him dance attendance on them and be for ever providing them with music and collations, the

Cavalier is finally reduced to the condition and dignity of a mere running footman. He is merely, to use the diction of the drawing-rooms of to-day a person of no importance, a valser, a creature to make up a quadrille or a cotillon, a *detrimental*, to use the English phrase, or else that modern Adonis, that parasite, known as the *cavaliere servante*, borrowed by the Italians from the old usages of Spain.

In connexion with these Italian modes, wherein we see gentlemen, in spite of all their disreputable adventures and nocturnal duels, again beginning to pay scant heed to women and their claims, it is to be remarked that simultaneously with the expiration of the *cavalier* period, jealousy on the part of husbands is quite out of fashion and the ancient code of vengeance abrogated. If rival lovers still at times roused the town, it was far more out of vanity than for love. The great majority of husbands in those days tolerated only too gladly a deputy alongside their wives.

Suchlike indifference as to the behaviour of the so-called amiable sex and as to the true point of honour shows plainly to what an extent notions of loving tenderness and moral obligation had been degraded among the higher classes since he days of gallantry, when jealous spouses would kill their wives on a mere suspicion of falseness.

This apathetic tolerance can be more and more clearly verified in proportion as the evidence comes nearer to our own time, and thus affords more and more conclusive proofs.

CHAPTER XI

The Man of Pleasure. — Humiliation of the Sword under the « Roi-Soleil ». — « Roués » and Ladies of fashion; « Lady-killers ».

Towards the end of the great reign of that king of pedants, Louis XIV, a period so hugely over-praised that we forget its absurdities, its last years of failure and defeat and even its bankruptcy to the tune of two thousand million francs, the Sword undergoes an entire metamorphosis in its character as representative of its wearers, in the importance of the rôle it plays and in its shape and aspect as a weapon.

Before the death of the « Roi-Soleil, » as he was called, who began by dancing in cuirasse of gold, with limbs naked and an enormous curled wig, in the Court-ballets, and on campaign had ten assorted clysters administered on the eve and on the days of battle (1), and ended by marrying a

(1) The Royal Library contains a burlesquely solemn memorandum of the victories and dysenteries, of Louis XIV. The original MS. in question (Supplément français, no. 1271) was given to the Royal Library by M. Hulst, who acquired it from Mme de Verrejon, heiress of M. Fagon, son of the famous King's physician, a Councillor of State and who died in 1744. It is a small folio, written on paper,

nursemaid, the gilded youth of the sword, with or without the assistance of the ladies, devotes itself to every sort of disorder and debauch, showing in this way its defiance of « the old dame of St

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with a binding adorned with fleurs-de-lis. At the beginning are two fine portraits of Louis XIV., engraved by Rousselet and van Schuppen, after Lebrun and Mignard.

« The Spanish army lay some quarter of a league distant from the French out-posts; and this army, under the command of the Prince de Condé, seemed superior to that of Turenne, who had quite made up his mind not to risk a general engagement. Well, the King at this juncture arrived in Turenne's camp in a condition which Vallot used to attribute to an over-indulgence in lemonade rather than to the nearness of the foe. « As the trouble was increasing, » relates the eye-witness we have mentioned, « I was compelled at Montmédi to administer a clyster, the King dismounting, but still all booted, and in a spot surely the most desolate and most inconvenient in the Kingdom. The effect of this remedy restored the King to some degree of strength and spirit; so that next morning he set forth to continue his designs and pursue his march. »

« The young King, in spite of the ambulatory treatment he submitted to with so much good-will, could not remain beyond five days in the camp, during which the Spaniards made some smart attacks; he then returned to Paris to complete his cure.

« Mazarin brought him once more to the army in September, to have him present at the siege of Sainte-Menehould, and lo! the plaguey diarrhœa beginning afresh.

« But this time Vallot, who was not a whit behind Molière's Purgon, devised a radical treatment which the King followed out, without giving up riding every day

Cyr » (Mme. de Maintenon), chief patroness of the sham devout among womankind (1).

In that vast Palace of Versailles which had cost France a hundred and fifty three millions, before the gold-braided coat of the King which cost him twelve million five hundred thousand francs (2),

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and proceeding with his great undertakings. The treatment consisted in ten clysters of different sorts. No less was needed to keep up the King's vigour, who now scarce ever left the saddle, and who forced the besieged to surrender, says the surgeon in his account, — which they would not have done so soon, had not his Majesty been present at the cost of personal suffering. » — P. L. Jacob. *Curiosités de l'histoire de France*, Paris, 1858.

(1) « Her pet rôle. She thought herself a mother of the Church and general directress of consciences for the Court. The meanness and poverty of her earlier life had narrowed her mind and spoiled her finer feelings to such a degree that all her life she was so small and petty in her ways of thinking as to be below the level even of a Madame Scarron. Nothing more repulsive than this baseness of spirit in combination with so radiant a position, and nothing so destructive of good, nothing so inconvenient and actually dangerous, as this continual vacillation with regard to men and affairs. Further she had the *foible* of allowing herself to be influenced by the confidences, better still by the confessions, she extracted. » — Saint-Simon *Mémoires*.

Versailles, April 19, 1701..... « The King is more attached than ever to *his dirt*. » Such is the designation the Princess Palatine gives to Mme de Maintenon. In the course of the same letter we find twice over this title of *old filth* applied to Mme de Maintenon. In other letters again it is « the old slop ».

(2) Louis XIV., though no longer a young man, wore at the reception of an ambassador from the King of Per-

and which he had had made to receive a pretended ambassador from Persia, the Sword hangs its head in discomfiture and humiliation. The Aristocracy loses its ancient pride and submits to the yoke of the imposing despot, while simultaneously the ladies of fine manners, wearied of the insipid etiquette he enforces, give full rein to frivolity and dissipation. Already, to follow the expression of Bossuet in his best pulpit manner, « the neighings of their lustful hearts are audible », and, as will presently be said of Mme. de Parabère, « they do much harm to young men. » Just as in preceding periods they had provoked the most unseemly notions, in the same way after the advent of a generation *blasé* with love, the type in fact denounced by Bussy-Rabutin, we shall find them encouraging the most inordinate and extravagant licence of morals. This is the way by which they reach their predetermined goal, viz. by an occult and furtive domination of the Sword resulting in its complete and final subjection to the sensual element in woman. This new system of behaviour they had originated from the earliest maturity of the *Great* King, at the time of the first Versailles fêtes. — « Divertisements by day, walks and feastings lasting till two and three in

sia a coat of a material of gold and watered silk embroidered with diamonds, worth several millions (about twelve millions five hundred thousand francs). It was so heavy that, says Dangeau, the King « was in a hurry to put it off after the ceremony was over. »

the morning, in the woods, were caried out in a fashion *of something more than gallantry,* » writes Mme. de Motteville.

This fashion *of something more than gallantry* is the germ of that modish dissipation which only reaches its highest completion at the commencement of the Regency. The mere word indeed of *The Regency* awakes in the imagination ideas of strange, wild obscenities and nocturnal orgies. From the general debauchery of those years, — debauchery which women do their best to stimulate, issue fully equipped for their tasks, the *roués*, the characteristic figures of the new epoch.

In the opinion of Jean-Jacques Rousseau the profligacy of his epoch was the inevitable consequence of the influence of women, for that feeling and gentle philosopher, — so he describes himself, — maintains, men will always be what the latter wish them to be. In very fact women make « fashion that is stronger than any law. « This undoubted fact would alone suffice to justify the philosopher's complaint, which is further supported by many other pieces of evidence.

« I am deliberately of the opinion, » wrote Cardinal de Bernis (1) in his *Memoirs*, « that

(1) « I am deliberately of the opinion that intercourse with women has changed French character and habits. In former days gentlemen were admitted to their society at earliest at thirty ; till that age men lived with men. This made their spirit more masculine and their principles more firm. Nowadays it is women who teach men

intercourse with women has changed French character and habit. » « Women have acquired such an ascendancy over men, have so thorough-

to think ; at seventeen, and sometimes even younger they enter the world. At that age it is but natural to regard the being agreable to the ladies as the main point of all ; and young men are accustomed from the first to idleness, effeminacy and frivolity, coming eventually to the business of life with empty heads and hearts crammed with false ideals.....

From what I say it may be judged how different are the great lords of to-day from those of old times ; with less credit and wealth than in the reigns of Louis XIII and Henri IV., they also have less dignity and prestige than under Louis XIV. Their expenses are heavy ; they love money, and do not blush to ask for it, and sometimes to receive it. At the same time the use they put it to can be no excuse for the generally embarrassed condition of their affairs. They display vanity, but legitimate pride never. » — Cardinal de Bernis. *Mémoires.*

The following description of a *Petit-Maître*, or Dandy, about the year 1730, will give some idea of the depth of effeminacy to which feminine influence had brought the youth of the Sword : « Here we have the *Petit-Maître* represented attiring himself with much care, and then running to his mirror, standing before which he gazes at his own face, of which he is the only admirer. Next we have him at his toilette table, where he applies patches to his cheeks and rouge, where his hair is put through the curling-irons, having the evening before been twisted in curl-papers, and his hair is artfully combed, powdered and scented. » *Journal des Savants*, 12mo., Dec. 1732, pp. 2159, 2160.) Again further on : « We see the same *Petit-Maître* well powdered

ly subjugated them, that their every thought is regulated by female standards » (1). « The ladies are queens of Society and supreme judges of good taste. » There can then be no doubt as to the transformation being their work, — the change from the ways and bearing of the *Cavalier*, still imbued with some tincture of the ancient gallantry, into the evil fashions and vicious practices of the *man of pleasure* ; there can be no doubt as to their being responsible for the utter degradation of the Sword and the tragic catastrophe of the good old times.

Diderot, a disappointed lover, if we may judge by certain of his Works and Letters, has depicted after Nature the vicious Man of Rank according to the mode of 1760. « The man of pleasure, » he says, « is gay, witty, dissipated, an amateur of every pleasure... » And lower down he adds, « Women love the libertine man of pleasure,

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and scented, dressed in a close-fitting coat glittering with gold and silver, with a waistcoat of equal splendour adorned with heavy bullion fringe; this is the fashion, and he is bound to follow it. Then he may be seen sallying out, looking himself over from head to foot, admiring all his person, stepping as if on air, bending gently over, now to one side now to the other continually, putting up his hand to his hair for fear a lock should be disarranged, gazing round to see if folks are not all enchanted at so charming a vision, — and all the rest of it..... » — Trévoux. *Dict. de la langue française*, see under *Petit-Maître*.

(1) Collé. *Journal*, III, 437 (1770).

because they are libertines themselves » (1). This is sufficiently plain speaking surely !

These, libertines, whether *of condition* or *of quality* (there was still a difference of meaning in the exact significance of the two expressions), entered into rivalry with the most adept courtesans and adapted themselves in these days to the entirely sensual part they had elected to play.

As a rule *mignonnes* and plump, with dimples in chin, cheeks, and knees and a spot considerably lower down than the shoulders, — thus their poets and painters, such as were really admitted to their intimacy, delineate them. Full of affectation from head to foot, « arranged to kill, » bedizened and bepainted more elaboretely than so many Nürnberg dolls, — a patch at the corner of the eye, eyes demurely dropped, lips smiling and moist as a peach bursting with ripeness, — they displayed above a low-cut and gaping corsage in which was stuck a rose exhaling its dying perfume, their bosom naked and set off to the utmost advantage, an enticing specimen of other dainties below. Such was the physical type essentially characteristic of ladies of society in the days of modish libertinism now dawning.

(1) The men of pleasure are well received in society because they are light-hearted, gay, witty, dissipated, easy-going, amateurs of every pleasure... Women love them, because they are themselves libertines and pleasure-lovers. I am far from sure whether women are really displeased with men who make them blush. « — Diderot. *Pensées*. — On Men of pleasure.

To match the new seductions, the new modes and fashions of love, gentlemen were bound to assimilate their costume, their manners and their effrontery to those of their charmers. Accordingly we see them represented in miniatures and contemporary portraits all powdered, and decked out, wearing embroidered coats, carrying a mere suspicion of a sword at their side and in their face a mere suggestion of the debauchee. Each seems to be saying with a simper of carmined lips the same self-satisfied words, « Look at me? I am Prince Prettyman. » What a contrast with the stern effigies of their own ancestors!

All these ludicrous effects follow from a want of steady principle, a light *insouciance* of character ; and simultaneously the *cartel* with its slender, flexible blade, the miniature sword of an over elaborated civilisation, now carries its process of degeneration in the direction of greater and greater slenderness and lightness to the highest degree, — and this not in France alone, but everywhere else in Europe as well. The man of quality conscious of his utter enfeeblement, practices the graceful art of fence. More than ever does the Art now reach a high perfection of swift and cunning movement, according to the latest mode of the Parisian fencing-masters, who in this century gained the privilege of ennoblement after following their profession for twenty years (1).

(1) In the XVIIIth. Century the fencing-masters of Paris established an Academy of Fencing consisting of twenty of their number.

While men of the Sword are thus mainly taken up with the suppleness of their muscles and the shape of their legs, their time shared between a fencing-master and a teacher of dancing, the conduct of war becomes finical in the extreme. The Marquise de Pompadour dictates the plans of a campaign (1). A band of actors plays in camp, and Mme. Favart, on the eve of a general engagement, announces to the soldiers the orders for the day in a set of verses.

War, long since made ridiculous, « is now conducted », in the phrase of a contemporary letter-writer, « only with rose-water » (2). The day on which the Prince de Soubise was defeated (in September 1757), « his camp was found filled with a host of cooks, comedians, hair-dressers, numberless parrots and parasols and I cannot tell how many cases of lavender-water, and so on » (3). In all this effeminacy, betraying itself as it does even in the Army in the field, cannot we see the disastrous influence of the

(1) « Mme de Pompadour, writing to Marshal d'Estrées who was with the army, with regard to the operations of the campaign, and drawing a sort of plan for his use, had marked on the paper with *patches* the different places she advised him to attack or defend. » — Mme De Genlis. *Souvenirs de Félicie*, Narrative of Mme. de Puisieux, mother in-law of Marshal d'Estrées.

(2) Mme De Genlis. *Correspondance.*

(3) Michelet. *Précis de l'histoire de France* (Abridgement of the History of France).

corrupt ladies of society and their mischievous proceedings ?

By their fault the gentleman of the Sword, scion of many a noble and famous stock, is no better than a veritable doll in women's hands. Those who have brought him to this state, wishing to keep him always in it, would cover him with ridicule if ever he left off smiling ; for indeed nothing could well be more melancholy in this world of half-harlots, or to put it only too euphemistically of half-virtue, than to see a painted face stripped of its gaiety and charm. « Never ceasing gaiety, » says an English traveller of 1785, « is the special mark of the Frenchman,... it is the sole and only way of pleasing the ladies. » The man of pleasure must make a joke of everything and under all circumstances. In his efforts to be agreeable, he is easily led away, and suddenly passes from harmless badinage to downright impertinence. He adopts a tone of light-hearted merriment ; and studies and arranges between two mirrors his gestures, carriage, attitude, — his effects in a word, and all the modes and vagaries ladies of fashion imperiously dictate for his acceptance.

In these days of over-refined affectation, naturalness was, as everyone knows, absolutely excluded from good society. Fashionable ladies made it a principle that sincerity is both absurd and incongruous, and that it shall never more be admitted into company of any distinction. Every-

thing, even in love-making, is carefully studied, — sentiments, expressions, caresses, gestures and sighs. Such is the law of the salons, where « Princes of France are terrified to death of a failure in graceful bearing. »

In the elegant Comedy played out in the great world of society under the form of an amorous myth, the ladies are, as their own poets feign, the flowers, and the gentleman the butterfly. According to well established conventions, the two parts are clearly kept ; all secret intercourse must be, (this is a rule of the game, M. de Bezenval assures us) « an interchange of two fond fancies. » The charm works, the match is made, faith is broken, the lovers part, — but *without* mutual reproaches. In this hurried life, where every unit is alive and active, chattering the language of folly or of philosophy, feeling is soon tainted, while serious thoughts are off and away, like motes in the sun-beam. Man and woman alike follow a dizzy course from bad to worse, and with a mocking laugh, that crystallizes and makes visible the mutual scorn of either, they adopt between two kisses this motto of the baldest egoism and maddest *abandon*, *To-day for us, to-morrow the end of the world.*

Oh ! miserable lack of seriousness! We can hardly in these days fail to bear a grudge, and a heavy one, against our predecessors of other times, who have brought France to the condition we know. Their conduct, that was at once cause and

material for tears, precedes by but a short space Holbein's « Grand Dance of Death of Noblemen and Ladies, of Lords and Prelates of the Church », under which title the painter has drawn his mournful and grotesque Comedy of Death.

During the period of the men of pleasure, the capriciousness and freaks of cruelty of lovers, so many examples of which are recorded, are not from 1715 onwards just what they seem to be at first sight. Not a few of the debauchees of the Regency were without a doubt really disappointed and discouraged sentimentalists, experiencing in the arms of their provisional mistress for the time being that strange feeling Shakespeare described in the words, *I love and hate her*, — at one and the same time.

The libertine attitude in love brought with it a species of fond spitefulness and cruelty, and without a shadow of doubt the very men who are at bottom most inclined to the sentimental (that eternal instinct of true lovers) become out of vexation and disillusionment and to dull the pain of deception and disappointment, impertinent or hostile even in their caresses.

The *roués*, soon so unpitying in their exigences, were at first but actors formed by ladies of fashion, whose delight it was to perfect them in their part in a short series of lessons. Yielding to the demands of the most highly gifted among their instructresses, gentlemen newly arrived at Court, forced by circumstances to foreswear the

old ideas of conduct that still survived here and there among provincial houses, soon learned to exaggerate their character of *maurais sujet*, for they felt bound to hide as though it were something shameful the recollections they retained of childhood and early loves.

Some practices of the *roués* and men of pleasure who had as examples and patrons of debauchery first the Regent, later the hero of Port-Mahon and eventually the notorious Marquis de Sade, display a peculiar character of erotic animosity very distinctive of their age, — one in which physical gratifications were carried to the last degree of refinement. The artificial ardour in amorous pleasures of those days takes on a cynical form ; not only does it boast of its excesses, but actually parades its abnormal extravagances and indulgences with women, who again on their side make public profession of ingenious and far-sought refinement and corruptions.

In the XVIIIth. Century simple vanity, which women turn each to her own profit as best she may, becomes, after affecting the ruin of the whole nobility of the Nation, the sole and only motive of a sort of wild carnival dance of sensuality to the tune of self-interest and pleasure. This same vanity under the constant exigences of the sex, makes it the man of pleasure's unceasing task to be for ever in pursuit of « the fair, » his flagging energies stimulated by the artificial aid of cantharides and suchlike aphrodis-

iacs, and accounts for the utter exhaustion of men of rank, and as a consequence the final shrinkage of the sword to almost a feather weight, even then seeming too heavy a burden for their breast to support.

The title of *seducers*, or lady-killers, a term invented in the last century by feminine cunning to describe men whom no woman could resist, is an expression at once offensive and inaccurate. Neither under the Regency, nor at any other period, have lady-killers ever really existed. The Ancients attributed the characteristics of irresistible seduction to none but women. Male sirens were unknown to the Ancient poets; the capricious nymphs they describe were always the agressors, tormenting and seducing the very gods themselves.

Is this to *seduce* a woman of so-called virtue, to master her some day, after she has definitely made up her mind, under the enticements of interest and pleasure, to abandon herself to the most enterprising of a pack of fools, — who is to quit her side anon under the belief he is an irresistible conqueror of hearts? And by-the-bye, in this connexion, what, think you, was the name Frenchwomen in 1780 gave to a timid lover? They called him « a German wooer ».

Going no farther back than the vogue of the vigorous sensual type of Don Juan among women of fashion, there are found plenty of contemptible and self-satisfied asses to whom the daughters of Eve, in full enjoyment of their carnal attractions, were ready in mere *gaiety of heart* to offer the apple, bitten into already, and even sometimes not untainted

with the venom of the serpent. But the men who, in this world of corrupt morals, adopted in former days the bold part of *seducers*, were not so in reality, spite of their professed viciousness of life, their rouged and painted cheeks and their costume of slashed silk and velvet. We cannot but recognize how insolent are the pretensions and how false the asseverations of these frail beauties when they allege themselves victims of the fascinations of the professed Lovelaces, — whose caresses, each duly counted and recorded, great ladies competed for amongst themselves. At this game, one in which their vanity was at least as exacting as their senses, all knew quite well, that after all and with all their light way of taking a lover, they would have to stomach some sorry tricks and shady practices on the part of these men of pleasure, the experts and adepts of love's mysteries. The coquettes of those days were well aware what to expect in their intrigues, which were deliberately premeditated, and the inconveniences and perils of which they were familiar with beforehand.

No! not even in France, a land where vice often assumed exquisitely graceful and attractive forms, did *seducers*, veritable lady-killers, ever actually exist; but seductive sirens there have always been found in plenty, eager to pluck the delicate first fruits of young gallants of the sword. For instance we may name the Court-ladies who besieged Louis XIV. with their assaults, and that long before his majority. These and their like, that they might study after nature

their artful manipulations, proceedings which are now matter for the Criminal Law, debauched young lads by force. At any rate it would appear so from the revelations of a certain amiable scamp of the fair sex, who very possibly was herself guilty of this kind of offence against good morals.

Que fait-on de ces gueuses
Qu'on mène à Chantilly ?

(What do they do with the naughty baggages they take off to Chantilly ?)

Under this designation, at a slightly later date, were designated in a popular song of which the *avocat* Barbier quotes the words (1), the most seductive

(1) « It would appear they have not succeeded in the projected journey to Chantilly. The King thinks of nothing but the chase, and has no wish to try the... I confess for my own part I think it a sad pity, for he is a well-built and handsome Prince; but if his tastes are so, what can be done ? All the elaborate preparations of the women who thought they could debauch the King have given rise to the couplet of a popular song to the air of *Margot la Ravaudeuse* (which runs as follows :

Margot la Rôtisseuse
Disait à son ami :
« Que fait-on de ces gueuses
« Qu'on mène à Chantilly ? » etc.

(Peg the Cookshop-keeper said to her beau, « What do they do with the naughty baggages they take off to Chantilly ? »)

Barbier, avocat of the Parliament of Paris, *Chroniques de la Régence et du siècle de Louis XV.* (Chronicles of the Regency and the Age of Louis XV.) August 1724.

ladies of the Court. These elegant *kidnappers* of polite society used to pursue the young king Louis XV. in the hopes of effecting his moral ruin.

Then « what do they do with the naughty baggages ? » the populace of Paris would start howling in its well-known tones, always a little cracked, « recalling an ass's bray ».

Judging by the general behaviour of the most fashionable swordsmen and men of pleasure, it is plain how deeply, under the influence of women, — the true and only seducers, the moral sense had been depraved among men of quality, and how they pursued without a prick of conscience a most despicable line of conduct. The Maréchal de Saxe buys his equipment for the Army and his amusement there at the expense of the savings and the price of the jewelry of an Actress (1). M. de Richelieu, whose ambition is directed to procuring his King a supply of *ladies of extreme youth and some attractions*, borrows from one of his discarded mistresses a hundred thousand francs with which to cut a dash as ambassador at Vienna, proposing to undertake in that Capital some diplomatic scheme or other of doubtful honesty. Last, but not least disgraceful, a master of the arts of seduction, a man

(1) Adrienne Le Couvreur « had several persons much in her debt, amongst others the Comte de Saxe, to whom she had rendered great pecuniary services... « Barbier. *Journal*, March 1730.

of weak lungs, who is terrified at the sight of a spider (1), the last of the Lauzuns, being really and truly in love with an Opera dancer, (he tells the story himself in his Memoirs), makes the chicken-hearted *protector* of the lady in question give him a thousand louis, and on these terms shares her favours with the paying lover (2).

The Princess Palatine, the Regent's mother, used to say : « Young men, in the days we live in, have but two objects in view, — dissipation and self-interest. » Could it be otherwise, considering the ideas inculcated upon them by women ?

Such principles, openly avowed by the leading *roués*, « men of the red heel at Versailles », representatives there of the old nobility of the Sword, give a sufficiently exact measure of the general honesty of their morals, dominated as these were by the charms of the sex. These big-wigs of elegant depravity, these fine gentlemen who, after their desperate bouts of erotic dissipation, sally out and play cock of the walk in the name of the mistresses they in their hearts despise, did not stop there. In 1726, — Barbier

(1) Duc de Lauzun. *Mémoires*, Paris (Barroir), 1822.

(2) « One day he was for taking umbrage at her having spent the night with me, and making a disturbance... But as it might be advantageous to show some complaisance towards such a good man, he gave me a thousand louis, asked pardon for his ill temper, and agreed to Mlle. Tétard's keeping me on. » Duc de Lauzun. *Mémoires*.

declares in his *Journal*, — the shameful vice, the vice against nature, comes again into fashion and prevails more extensively than ever. » All our young lords, he says, were madly addicted to it, to the great chagrin of the Court ladies « (1) Of these men thus brought to ruin and dishonour by their disgust for women, there were at that period in Paris alone, according to the police registers, something like forty thousand. (A greater number still was noted at Berlin.) After this nothing need surprise us.

Before Mesmer's magnetic tub, at sight of which they are fond of falling in a faint, the fantastic creatures of wanton pleasure, among whom are included some few of the highest rank and influence, henceforth ask for nothing else of deliberate purpose but supernatural excitements or profitable intrigues. In this way they endeavour to stifle their sensual regrets in eccentricities and distractions, sometimes merely odd, sometimes fraudulent. They speculate, swindle, cheat others or ruin themselves at cards « The

(1) « The vice... has long been prevalent in this country, and for some time since has been more the fashion than ever. All the young lords were given up to it madly, to the great chagrin of the Court ladies. » — Barbier, *Journal*, May 1725.

Under Louis XVI., according to the police registers, there were at Paris no less than 40,000 of these creatures. The figure is repeated by Bachaumont and Mercier. In Prussia, the number was yet more considerable.

Court is nothing better tham a gambling hell, » (1) wrote Joseph II. during his stay in France. The greatest ladies, following their *heart* more freely than ever, — the light heart so happily delineated by the Chevalier de Boufflers (2), — enter into relations with the first comer. Then as a last refinement of debauchery they take to Actors. Michu, Clairval, Jélyotte, had as many fine lady mistresses as they pleased. The most high-born of fashionable dames indulge in « merry doings » in the arbors of suburban inns, and enjoy the pleasures of low life at the tavern of Ramponeau. Some go in for free-masonry with Cagliostro, others for philosophy with d'Alembert, or give themselves up to acting, — the stage indeed being their true element, and every one of them attracted by the glare of the foot-lights. The favoured few play before the Duc d'Orleans or at the theatre of Trianon, in the privacy of the Royal circle, comedies and spectacles so indecent they could not possibly, says Bachaumont, be acted except before great princes or women of pleasure. « From the repertoire of these may be mentioned, *Le Mariage sans curé*, *Léandre grosse*. *Leandre étalon*, *l'Amant poussif*, and *Joconde* (1),

(1) « The bankers at the Queen's play-table, to obviate the cheating of the Court ladies who trick them daily, have got leave from her Majesty to put certain precautions in force. » — Bachaumont, *Mémoires*.

(2) Boufflers. *Poésies*, — Le Cœur (The heart).

each more scandalous and abominably indecent than the other.

The Baronne d'Oberkirch relates how at the Castle of Brunoy plays of such outrageous obcenity were acted that no one could witness them without being dishonoured ! « The fêtes as a rule terminated with *a general orgie.* » Such are the details to be learned from the gazettes and fashionable literature of the time with regard to the conduct and morals of women, always aided and abetted by the Sword.

Let us at this point analyse a little the complex influence thus invariably exercised over the social aggregate by this constant association of the two characters.

In these years of light-hearted joys and reckless vices, when idleness is elevated into an actual and earnest profession, men of quality wear out their energies in doing nothing ; they have just, and only just, the needful time to devote to their toilet. It is a matter of the first importance to a man of pleasure to appear abroad only when powdered with proper art, « To be well dressed and appointed is sufficient alone to secure success, by making us », one of the class has written, « popular with the ladies ; these are all-powerful and push us forward in the world. »

(1) Marriage without a Parson, Léandre with Child, Léandre in the Stud, The Broken winded Lover, Joconde, see Henri Taine, *Origines de la France contemporaine.* — L'Ancien Régime.

Happy the best powdered gallants, the *protégés* of ladies of a certain age and consequently of a higher degree of viciousness. These latter, following their well-known tendency that way, would engage in many a scandalous affair and shady intrigue, sometimes actually making traffic of younger women's favours. Their influence was very great, as it was they who introduced the King's mistresses to Court, and associated with them in intimacy to pleasure him.

At every age, and under all circumstances, the mass of women of luxurious life and wanton habits more and more incurs the contempt of men of quality. These last, careless of consequences and without any proper strength of character, appear henceforth to have abandoned, in weariness of spirit and weak selfishness of heart, all attempt to defend their matrimonial honour, so highly valued in former days. Profoundly convinced of the uselessness of their reproaches and the entire impossibility of constraining their dashing consorts to even a pretence of virtue, they grow utterly indifferent on the point, and as M. de Bezenval puts it, jealousy is now a thing of the past. even between lovers. »

« When first I entered society, » writes Cardinal de Bernis (1), « I found it an established principle there that it was absurd for a husband to love his wife, or for a wife to love her husband. »

(1) Cardinal DE BERNIS, *Mémoires.*

« Any man who should wish to be the only one to enjoy his wife, » says Montesquieu, « would be looked upon as a disturber of the public happiness. » Accordingly the men of quality of this complaisant and cynical generation became as a rule, by a sort of perverted sympathy, the bosom friends of their mistresses', wives', or even their daughters' lovers.

In 1787, at Vienna no less than in Italy, noblemen allowed their wives a *cicisbeo* (or *friend of the house*), or even several such, the toleration of whom by the husband almost took rank as a recognized clause in marriage contracts. We can only repeat once more in this connexion, — *Ce que femme veut, Dieu le veut.*

It was then a mark of good taste and breeding in the days of elegant dissipation and among the graceful *roués* of the period, *not* to be ticklish as to the honour of the ladies of the family, — seeing such was their pleasure. The Regent himself had given the example of tolerance in this respect, — an example followed in the neighbouring Courts (1). Still, in spite of his lack of scruple in the matter of adultery and the

(1) The Margravine of Baireuth, sister of Frederick the Great, relates that during his stay at the Court of Dresden he fell in love with the Princess Orselska, daughter of Augustus the Strong, who was at the same time his father's mistress, and that of his brother, Count Rutowski. — Dr. Johannes Scherr. *Society and Manners in Germany.*

like distractions with the fair sex, he opined, with regard to the point of honour, « that duels were really a trifle too old-fashioned. » It is to the *Mémoires secrets* published under the pseudonym of Duclos that we are indebted for this curious detail.

« Impossible to credit, » wrote Montesquieu about 1740, « to what an extent all admiration for women has declined in the present Century. »

Gentlemen having lost all respect for their ancient idol, a woman no longer feels in a position to draw herself up and say soberly, « You are wanting in proper respect, Sir ! » Thirty years later, the Abbé Thomas in his rather insipid essay on feminine characteristics (1), thus expresses himself : « I will note that in our days there are fewer eulogies of women than ever. » « Nowadays, » he goes on, « gratification of the senses is the chief thing, not sentiment. » To be convinced of the truth of this, we have only to recall Louis XV.'s heartless remark, the rainy morning of the funeral of his chief favourite, Mme. de Pompadour, « Shocking weather the Marquise has for her last journey ! »

There is no lack of other evidence to attest the mutual contempt between sex at the period among persons of fashion, — a natural result of their conduct towards one another in their sensual relations.

(1). Abbé Thomas. *Essai sur le caractère, les mœurs et l'esprit des femmes dans les différents siècles* (Essay on the Character, Manners and Disposition of Women in Different Ages). Paris, 1771.

« Gentlemen, » writes Mme. de Genlis, no longer know how to address women. » They are habitually insolent and at times positively offensive even with the greatest ladies. The Comte de Vaudreuil, out of sheer mischief and rudeness, broke the billiard cue, which the Queen, Marie-Antoinette « had reserved for her own use at the game, and on which she set a high value. » Verily we have travelled a long way from the true-hearted gallantry of olden times, which « offers so strong a contrast, » says a contemporary gazette, « with the unconcerned, cavalier tone our dandies of to-day adopt with women ! » At the same time how obvious that it is women themselves who are to blame for this annihilation of our well-grounded respect for the sex.

While the ladies of the time, painted and powdered, resemble Venus, who dared not sneeze for fear of making wrinkles, dissipation enters on further developments. Noble gentlemen of the sword, under feminine influence, appear to be infected with the same madness which had already seized on the whole female sex and tormented them without mercy, especially towards the decline of their years and beauty. Some of the greatest lords in France, « where so few real nobles are left, » as Cardinal de Bernis wrote in his Memoirs, are enrolled as members of the notorious « Fools' Brotherhood of Dijon » (1).

(1) « Some very great lords have themselves enol-

The Sword now utterly enfeebled and demoralized by the abuse of every kind of pleasure offered it so lavishly by the « dear delightful creatures » of easy virtue, loses all decorum, prestige and dignity. A cross-grained Attorney actually allows himself to rebuke publicly in the theatre a Captain in *Monsieur*, the King's brother's, Guards. The fine gentlemen of the day ogle and simper, compare a woman to a rose-bud, which is, Voltaire declares, the especial mark of an ass, or else with *blasé* airs and an affectation of cheap scepticism, after having been guilty of « every baseness of pride, » grimace, dance minuets, gamble in stocks and shares with Law, swindle in company of false coiners, or borrow money at exorbitant interest in order to give porcelain coaches to nymphs of the Opera, that the latter may appear under the guise of goddesses and insult the married women, their rivals, in the alleys of Longchamps, « where all the world makes fun of their gold-showering *Plutus*. »

Last of all, after having masqueraded in women's clothes in pursuit of some naughty design, as did the Abbé de Choisy (1), not a few great noblemen marry beneath them, a proceeding

led chevaliers in the « Brotherhood of Fools » of Dijon. — — Du Tillot. *Fête des Fous* (Feast of Fools), Lausanne and Geneva, 1741.

(1) *La Vie de M. l'abbé de Choisy, de l'Académie franç.* (Life of the Abbé de Choisy, Member of French Academy), Lausanne, 1748.

which among their proud ancestors meant loss of rank. The Comte d'Évreux married the daughter of Crozat, a former lackey who had made a fortune (1).

Along with the battered survivors of the *roués* of the Regency, most of them victims to the maladies incidental to the indiscriminate Venus, the new generation, anaemic and enfeebled, but ever determinately bent on the pursuit of pleasure, after having followed lawless loves for a while, veers suddenly to the pastoral, the idyllic, the milk and watery. Its fêtes are enlivened by rustic masquerades, flower-bedecked straw hats, shepherd's crooks, while country dances are stepped to the sound of tabors, tambourines and bag-pipes. Then it grows grave, and plays at philanthropy. Again some devotees of pleasure absurdly enough take up with revolutionary ideas, at once justifying and explaining the delicious *bon mot* of Mme. de Lameth, who said, speaking of her son who had turned *constitutionnel*: « Why! I must have passed a night, I suppose, in my antichamber! » This is the time when, under the illusions fostered by the *illuminati*, worn out debauchees dream fondly (and this on the very eve of 1793) of purchasing of the Comte de Saint-Germain the receipt for his famous elixir of life, that they may never die.

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(1) « Crozat married his daughter to the Comte d'Evreux, of the noble house of Bouillon, who actually received fifteen or sixteen hundred thousand livres as her dowry, but who never slept nor lived with his wife, though a very amiable person. » Barbier. *Journal*, February 1724.

Meantime the different parts of Europe all endeavour to imitate French licence. Taking French fashions and above all French manners as models, their only thought is now, as ever, how to live after Parisian models.

Frenchwomen, an Englishman declares about the year 1785 (1), are the undisputed arbitresses of fashion, — and this not merely in France, but in foreign countries, which all of them copy France." They direct public opinion, and are thus the leaders in every vice. A French tourist wrote in 1787: "Our fashions and ideas are disseminated to the frontiers of Moldavia and Wallachia; from Pressburg to Cronstadt we give the tone to society."

For more than a hundred years now, the wives and daughters of Venetian nobles, the *gentildonne*, as they were called in Italian, in open rivalry with the famous courtesans of that gay city, had « always imitated as much as possible French manners and fashions, » — as we read in the *Mercure de France*, a miscellany of the period. In Spain, the Queen, to popularize French licence, « now and again indulged in the diversion of

(1) « In France it is women dictate in a way what is to be said and prescribe what is to be done in the world of fashion. » John Andrews, *A Comparative View*, 1785.

Saint-Cloud, August 6, 1722. « The Duke of Luxemburg's daughter, the Duchess de Rais, has plunged so deep in debauchery that, to gratify the Duc de Richelieu, she supped naked with him and his boon companions. » Princess Palatine, *Letters*.

stripping naked along with her maids of honour, and then admitting to her apartments the best made men of the Kingdom, » — so Voltaire relates in one of his letters (1).

While the women of Southern lands were thus imitating the corrupt morals of France, — to West and East and above to Northwards they grossly and coarsely exaggerated the vices of that country. At the very time when the Viennese ladies, and no less the citizens' wives of the same capital, indulged a similar spirit of dissipation, Catherine II. was perverting her Russian fellow-countrywomen by the example of shameless licentiousness she offered them.

About the year 1772, the English Ambassador,

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(1) We read in Voltaire's *Correspondance:* « I should be really glad for you to have known nothing of the news from Spain; in that case I should be enjoying the pleasure of informing you how the King of Spain has just had his wife, daughter of the late Duke of Orleans, put in confinement. In spite of her pointed nose and long face, she did not fail to follow the noble example set her by her sisters. I have been assured that occasionally she enjoyed the distraction of stripping absolutely naked along with her prettiest maids of honour, and in this condition having the best-made gentlemen of the Kingdom introduced into her apartments. The whole household has been broken up, and not a soul left in attendance on her in the Castle where she is confined, but an old duenna.... » Voltaire, Letter to the Presidente de Bernières dated July 20. 1724. Consult also the statement of Lemontey on *Les filles du Régent* in the *Revue rétrospective*, series I. vol. I. pp. 200–209., which confirms the particulars given by Voltaire.

Lord Malmesbury, after speaking of German women as wanton harpies and noting the ill conduct of the sword at that date, goes on, « At Berlin, — the same city which Frederick of Prussia used to designate a *filthy stable*, — no man is manly, no woman modest. » « Every woman in the place has been ruined, » wrote another observer of the same period, George Forster. Corruption indeed reached such a pitch that society ladies condescended to play the part of procuresses and debauch young girls. . . Some of these ladies do not blush to sit in the theatre on the public courtesans' benches; while others indulge in orgies that would have astounded the Regent himself. These facts are recorded in the work of Dr. Scherr, where we may read much other evidence of Germanic demoralization, then at its height.

Beyond the Rhine, towards the end of the XVIIIth. Century, « Officers' wives in especial are common property ; their husbands sell, exchange and lend them to a comrade, each turn and turn about » (1). Lastly in Turkey, where very soon the least worn-out *effendis* will not have more than one wife (2), the harems had become hot-

(1) Dr Johannes Scherr, *Society and Manners in Germany*.

(2) The Seraglio of Abdulrahman contained six thousand three hundred wives, concubines and black eunuchs. — Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. II.

beds of depravity. Quite recently a high dignitary of the Seraglio has pronounced the dictum, « The Sultans of the present day are Frenchwomen. »

It was under suchlike conditions that European society reached its foulest and muddiest low-water mark, and that that general deliquescence came about which marks the end of the *ancien régime*.

This brings us to the sinister catastrophe of the drama. The sabre is now to replace the fine, straight blade of the nobler weapon, — the word *sabre* and *to sabre* only date from the end of the XVIIIth. Century. The sword is a thing of the past ! Duels are become exceedingly rare phaenomena (1), — the Marquise de Nesle and the Comtesse de Polignac, rivals for the favour of a *roué* of limited resources, fought one with pistols (2) at this time, Yes ! the sword is a thing of the past ! The hysterical Théroigne de Méricourt (she was a Belgian from Liège), presently to be whipped, but always less than her deserts, by her friends the Sansculottes, will soon in the coming Revolutionary days adopt as part of her decorative paraphernalia, in her role of *Citizeness*

(1) « Nowadays the walking cane has replaced the sword, which is no longer worn habitually.... The Parisian has voluntarily disarmed, for his own convenience and in the interests of common sense. Duelling was frequent, it has now become rare. » — Mercier, *Tableaux de Paris* (Pictures of Paris).

(2) Richelieu, *Mémoires.*

General of Brigade, the blade of uncouth shape that is to serve for the earliest assassinations of aristocrats (1).

The Sword is a thing of the past, and with it disappears finally anything resembling discipline. In June 1789, « two companies of the *Gardes Françaises* refused to serve. Sent back to barracks, they break leave and are to be seen every evening, marching two and two down to the Palais Royal, — the general rendez-vous of the light women whose lovers and hangers-on they are » (2). During the sessions of the States General, sixteen thousand deserters used to prowl about the outlying parts of Paris, where they were lodged by prostitutes and other harpies, that have in all times been the agents of corruption for soldiers.

Cardinal de Bernis, who in his Memoires indulges in pretty free criticism of his contemporaries of either sex, complains bitterly of « the folly and mean spirit of France and her Generals and the deterioration of the courage and honour of the Country, » now degraded to the lowest depths. He adds, « We no longer understand war, no

(1) H. Taine, *L'Ancien Régime.*

(2) « Pretty near all the soldiers of the Guard belong to this class (of *souteneurs* or bullies), and indeed not a few enlist in the Regiment only to be enabled to live at the charge of these unfortunates. » — Peuchet, *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 1789, quoted by *Parent Duchâtelet.* — H. Taine, *La Révolution.*

Nation is less military than ours, and there is not one that can have troubled less about tactical matters. We do not even possess a good Map of the Vosges . . . . It is sheer midsummer madness from the least to the greatest of us. »

« The majority of our young Colonels have the habits and morals of shop-girls ; all they long for is quiet, idleness and money, and wordliness has entirely supplanted the old soldierly virtues. Ignorance, frivolity, carelessness, cowardice, take the place of the sturdy, masculine qualities of more heroic days. It is all more sickening than words can say. »

Such are the depths to which women, — « ever the fatal originators of events, » and their wiles have at last degraded the nobility of the Sword.

CHAPTER XII.

Last Days of Degradation. — The « Man of Sentiment, » Final Disuse of the Sword.

In these the last days of the Sword, demoralized and debilitated as it is by excess, women of society, unused to fresh air and blanched by nocturnal indulgences, lose what is left to them of vigour, flesh and sexual zest. Their beauty of this later generation languishes, changes and deteriorates ; no more do they display, as in Fragonard's *Chemise enlevée*, the charming, plump lines of the heyday of the Regency, the honeymoon, so to speak, of carnal pleasure.

Delicacy and sickliness, qualities that, speaking generally, are to dominate female charms henceforth, now come to be regarded as marks of distinction and high birth. The fair no longer answer to the type of perfect woman imaged by mythology and described in the poets of Greece.

This degeneracy of the female sex, which is before long to base its chief distinction on a native coldness of temperament, leads to a greater and ever greater enfeeblement of society, where « the hen crows louder than the cock. »

In 1770 appeared a Work entitled : « *Dégradation de l'espèce humaine par l'usage des corps*

à baleine (Deterioration of the Human Species as a consequence of the Use of Whalebone Stays) (1) — a study demonstrating the pernicious action of those articles. By the way, the makers of these terrible corsets, who were men, tried

(1) Bonnaud, *Dégradation de l'espèce humaine par l'usage des corps à baleines, ouvrage dans lequel on démontre que c'est aller contre les lois de la nature, augmenter la dépopulation et abâtardir pour ainsi dire l'homme, que de le mettre à la torture dès les premiers instants de son existence, sous prétexte de le former.* (Deterioration of the Human Species as a Consequence of the Use of Whalebone Stays, a Work wherein it is proven to be against the Laws of Nature, to further encourage the Depopulation of the Country and to Debase Mankind, — to thus put it to the Torture from the earliest Period of Existence, under the Specious Pretence of training it to a Due Shape.)

« The public opinion of the Century revolted *en masse* against this fashion of Stays, one which the women would not give up however at any price. It was a regular Crusade, from the remarks of *the modern Aretino* to the observations of the anatomist Winslow, from the strong language of the excellent Métra to the *Avis de Reisser sur les corps baleinés* (A Word of Advice by Reisser on Whaleboned Stays), and the lamentations af the Chevalier de Jaucourt in the *Encyclopédie*. Throughout the Century attacks on the article never cease ; it is held responsible for the death of a great number of children, — responsible for the death af the Duchesse de Mazarin. The form most in fashion was the *Greek* Corset, first of all because of the name, and secondly owing to the cheapness of the article, though this sort was very dangerous, in as much as the whalebones only came up to the under part of the breasts and might easily injure them. » — E. and J. de Goncourt.

them on ladies and girls with their own hands.

Thus women of really sound health being from this time on the exception rather than the rule, the process of general deterioration makes giant strides. The man of quality is a pale, withered looking creature, utterly effeminated ; for, more than ever now, do the ladies make the chief merit of his puny person consist in certain special advantages, absurdly over-rated, such as good teeth, handsome eyes, white hands and above all fine legs, details which they themselves, if they have the smallest pretension to excel in them, are so fond of showing us.

Good teeth and a fine leg ; thanks to these gifts of nature, a *lady's man* generally rose to be Colonel of a Regiment or Governor of a Province.

Towards 1780, Society ladies, tired of Court Abbés and philosophers, fishers in the troubled waters of Revolution, phrase-mongers who are paving the way for the horrors of 1793, begin to weary of the high jinks of small and select supper-parties and of their « dear, delightful monsters ». They set to work to change at their own good pleasure the particular forms indulgence is to take for the future. Unsettled in temperament, ideas and health, they put their heads together to find a remedy for the general disorganization and discouragement, and invent the « man of sensibility », the gentleman of quality in other words turned melancholic. For ever on the look

out for « some new thing, » something novel and excessive in the way of sensation, they are fain to supplement vicious living by *sensibility*. After the openhearted, frank obscenity, the mad dissipation, of an earlier day, they devise a new, exaggerated and complicated system of pleasure, a system of the head rather than of the heart, but which can still, for lack of a better, provoke in them a sort of bastard erethism. By these means they think to re-animate once more the senses whose zest they have well nigh annihilated.

Yet once again taking up the « pen of the ready writer, » they make the man in the street their confidant, and reveal in letters and Memoirs to the public at large and the mass of posterity, things that mere common decency should have made them hold their tongues about. Like Rousseau confessing his every baseness, they denominate this the *triumph of virtue*, — a form of perfection fairly represented by the two sexes, one as much spoiled by neurosis and anaemia as the other.

The fair dames of the period resorted to every means to stimulate their *sensibilities*. They seek excitement in dissecting dead bodies (1) ; then again, after the perusal of Rousseau's *Émile*, they are frantic to mimic with ridiculously exaggerated affectations the transport of mothers' love,

(1) « The young Comtesse de Coigny was so passionately fond of this dreadful study (Anatomy), that she would never start on a journey without taking in the boot of her travelling carriage a corpse to dissect, just as one takes

and in this way recommence their pernicious and debilitating influence over the rising generation, whose training they had systematically neglected for a long series of years.

The *woman of fashion*, grown a plaintive, tearful being, might very well give the same answer as Diderot, when surprised one day in tears : « It is only a sad tale I have been telling myself. » Thus came the final stage in the search after pleasure, a thing of the head alone, — a phase marked by the pitiful figure of the « man of sensibility ».

In boudoirs still decorated with *amorini* and wanton pictures, which figured as a rule even in young unmarried girls' bedrooms, in face of representations of Priapus, god of gardens, of nymphs and naked Satyrs, and emblems of Love, fair dames and pretty maids, ever full of ingenious wiles, devise and practise in the privacy of their chambers the rose-tinted magic of the new love. Adopting many an unexpected stratagem, they enter, by the road of pathos and angelic looks, on the new epoch when they will grant their favours

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with one a book to read. » — Mme de Genlis, *Mémoires*, vol. I.

This mania for dissection was for some little time extremely fashionable with ladies of quality.

The young Mme. de Francueil, on seeing Rousseau for the first time, bursts into tears. — Mme. de Genlis, *Mémoires*, ch. XVII.

This is what Edmond About describes as « That plague of Sentiment. »

only to the accompaniment of cries of horror and affright. A mass of mannerism at the very instant of self-surrender, they display their charms in an alluring confusion, and with a grace that is the result of infinite study, and a quaint combination of indecency and elegance. They are no longer able under any circumstances to rouse, whether for battle or duel, the old warlike enthusiasm of the Sword; nay! by dint of their lamentations and tearful sighs, they are rather a direct incentive to its progressive enfeeblement.

They are for ever fainting, — in the Theatre, in Church, at balls, in the streets, and above all in the arms of their lovers, grown pretty callous by this time even in the famous boudoirs with their alluring pictures. However this new mode, this trick of theatrical swoons (1), with seductive little airs of confusion and premeditated attitudes, did not last long. It is worthy of note that the ladies, who weary so quickly of every novelty, suppressed of a sudden and by common consent in 1821 the practice of these pretented seizures.

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(1) Among swooning ladies, one of the most seriously affected was Mme de Lamballe, whose case deserves mention. She had fainting fits that frequently lasted for two hours; while the scent of a bunch of violets was enough to make her feel ill, and the sight of a lobster or crab, even merely represented in a picture, brought on a nervous crisis. — Mme de Genlis, *Mémoires* vol. II.

Be it observed at this point that it was solely in self defence that men of the Sword ever adopted the ridiculous rôle of « a man of sensibility ». He accepted the part only as a matter of necessity, because now by the expenditure a few fictitious tears, he was able to enjoy in a woman's arms the respite he so sorely needed.

Exhausted and in consequence liable to grievous chance of failure under the old rough and ready love-making, he welcomes with a readiness hardly complimentary to the sex, the repose the ladies, tired out themselves, are judicious enough to offer him.

To such *sentimental* relations of the Sword with the modern Heloïses did the absurd, insipid heroes of dark, hysterical mystery, who moulded themselves on Saint-Preux and Werther, owe their existence. On these ridiculous types was built up the whole school of impotent and despairing lovers, who under a nauseous pretence of being so romantic and interesting, prolonged for half a century longer the silly affectation of sentimental melancholy, in other words a green-sickness of scepticism complicated with pulmonary consumption!

An adept in these last developments was bound under feminine guidance and instigation from 1785 onwards, to be ready to invoke Nature on the smallest provocation, to understand the art of falling into sentimental rhapsodies at sight of the moon, holding sweet converse with a flower, a blade of grass, a star, calling Heaven to witness

or bursting into sobs on the shores of a lake. In this fashion did men of society, always under female guidance and impulse, succeed in bringing love itself into contempt at the end of the XVIIIth. Century.

Simultaneously with this never-ceasing search for pleasure, in Paris and in foreign lands alike, do the proportions and vigour of the Sword everywhere show manifest marks of degeneration. A familiar axiom of economic science declares that « every vicious act is followed by diminution of force. »

In Prussia the philosopher King, the flute-playing monarch, Frederick II., seeing the stature of his Guards and Grenadiers diminishing among the new recruits, endeavoured to get a set of taller men manufactured by bringing together selected dames of stalwart physique and soldiers of exceptional robustness of constitution ; but the results he obtained hardly came up to his expectations (1).

On this point universal observation bears wit-

(1) « He spared no expense or pains when it was a question of getting big fellows for his Potsdam Guards. His recruiting agents hunted desperately after giants all the world over ; and he would pay from 1000 to 1500 thalers a-piece for them. The tallest of all, an Irishman, cost him as much as 1900. He hoped to produce a race of drum-majors, by dint of marrying his fine soldiers to tall women, but the experiment did not succeed. » Dr Johannes Scherr, *Society and Manners in Germany.*

ness to the fact that if the man of the Sword has not altered in his different distinctive National instincts and characteristics, at any rate his ancient physical perfections have been more and more modified under the influence of women, and especially of ladies of social position we must add, from the Age of Gallantry onward and above all during the epoch of the man of pleasure, or libertine period.

In the XVIIIth. Century there were very few courtesans in the strict sense of the term. At that date among *viveurs* it was at most a question of keeping actresses, who would enter into a not very successful competition with the ladies of the great world, their comrades in dissipation at many a *souper fin*. Still Maréchal de Richelieu used to protect girls of the streets. « They were *more women* than the others, » he used to declare.

In those days the professional light women were in matters of pleasure far less expert and consequently much less enticing than the ladies of society.

As for women of the middle classes, judging by the keen predilection for men of rank and soldiers they still exhibited at this period, it might be readily supposed, to use a phrase of a witty baggage of the time, that « they thought they were going to do the whole job themselves » (1).

(1) Bassompierre tells us how women of the trading class would throw themselves at the head of men of rank :

The question of their virtue, which Retif de la Bretonne would hardly admit at all, brings us to quote the following passage from the Recollections of the Marquise de Créquy:

« The Major of the Gardes Françaises did not know whom to listen to and found it impossible to satisfy all the demands made upon him for the supply of sentinels and escorts. — Cartouche, it must be remembered was at that time the terror of Paris. The Mousquetaires had begun by

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« For four or five months, it happened every time I passed over the Petit-Pont (at that time the Pont-Neuf was not built yet), that a pretty woman, a sempstress at the sign of the two Angels, used to make me deep curtsies, and would keep me in sight as long as ever she could. So soon as I noticed what she did, I used to look at her also, and return her bows with more carefulness. It came about one day that, on my arrival from Fontainebleau in Paris, passing over the Petit-Pont, as soon as ever she saw me coming, she put herself at the door of her shop, and said to me as I went by, « Sir! I am your very humble servant. » I returned her greeting, and turning round several times, I perceived that she followed me with her eyes as long as she could.... I then made my lackey dismount and give his horse to the postilion to lead, and sent him to tell her, that seeing the curiosity she showed to see and greet me, if she desired a more particular view, I offered to see her at any place she should name. She replied to the man that this was the best news any one could have brought her, and that she would go to any spot I preferred, provided it was on condition of sleeping between a pair of sheets with me. I accepted the arrangement. » — Le Maréchal de Bassompière, *Journal de ma vie, Mémoires*, June, 1606, edition by the Historical Society of France, vol. I.

displaying a most laudable zeal, but it was soon discovered that these gentlemen were better at noise than real work. It was found that the security of merchandise might be bought too dear, — at the price of that of the merchants' pretty wives and the peace of mind of Parisian tradesmen in general, who soon wished all gay Mousquetaires at the Devil !»

No one, out of the pulpit, has ever ventured to address to the female sex even in the periods of its greatest disorders, simple words of admonition such as these :

« Gentlewomen and great ladies, you who have been endowed with every charm and every attraction, you who were originally idolised by the reverent and submissive Sword, what have you made, I ask, of all its respect, of all its fond illusions, of all its true-hearted faith in you and fanatic tenderness ? what have you made of all your prestige of other days ? It is you, you, who have perverted the spirit of chivalry and made good men womanish !

« And you, modern priestesses of Venus, degenerate successors of the *noble courtesans* and gallant ladies of pleasure of olden time, what have you made of the robust and martial gallantry of yore ? You, I say, you have compromised Love and dishonoured the pursuit of pleasure.

« And lastly, you, women of the *bourgeoisie*, descendants of the matrons who were the very symbols and types of family life, what have *you*

made of your duties to the social body? From the Middle Ages onward you have shown a deliberate perversion of character, you have made public display of your absurd luxury and silly conceit. You have debauched the men of the Sword, and by your ill example demoralized the masses, who in their turn both envy and disparage you. »

Such the discourse Rousseau, Mme. de Warens' troublesome protégé, might very well have directed against the women of his day.

A very surprising result might be reached in the way of contrast, if reversing the actual facts of history, we should picture women doing exactly the opposite of what they have actually done. Just think what a different course the events of military history would have taken, if they had been left entirely unaffected by evil influences on the part of the sex. A single example chosen from modern times by way of striking proof will serve to embody and give actuality to this reflection.

If in 1868 a woman had not at Compiègne dissuaded the Emperor Napoleon III. against accepting the alliance with Prussia, an alliance actually offered him by von Bismarck, we should have had no War of 1870. Without the War, we should have had no Commune in 1871, and without the Commune, we should not have had the present Republic, which is preparing the apotheosis of noisy female politicians and intriguers,

wishing as it does to add them, as it will do some day, to the electorate. Judging by such a series of consequences as here exhibited, we may realize what effects have been regularly produced by women's intrigues in the days when their authority was at its highest.

The pernicious influence they exercised stands revealed, we repeat the statement, at every stage of History ; and their conduct in the past is a full and sufficient explanation of every failure and every degradation the Sword has had to undergo in the course of time.

« The deterioration of type among noble families, » says Moreau de Tours, « is noted in numerous writers : Pope remarks to Spencer on the sorry looks of members of the English aristocracy in his day ; and in the same way physiologists had even earlier noted the short stature of the Spanish grandees at the Court of Philip V. » As for Frenchmen, long before 1789, they were amongst the poorest specimens of humanity, according to the testimony of many witnesses.

The Hindoos imagine that after the lapse of a certain cycle of years and attainment of certain degrees of relative perfection, men pass into the form and condition of apes ; accordingly these animals possess at Benares a magnificent palace as their consecrated abode. This curious belief, — one full of encouragement to progressive societies, — is connected with a theory of Hindoo philosophy thus stated in the sacred books of the

Laws of Manu : « Man is made contemptible by women, » — a dictum that may very well serve to sum up our argument.

There is no more to be said ; the old World has lived its life, and dies of its inherent faults. The gentleman abandons the sword in sheer exhaustion, while dissipation dying by inches of its own excess reaches its last and final stage of degradation and decay.

The Chivalric type of Love endured for close upon five Centuries ; the spirit of genuine gallantry but two ; Cavalier ways and habits subsisted in their entirety barely sixty years ; while finally the practices of the man of pleasure, the *libertine* modes, in full completeness, count at most only some forty years of life, — after which the reign of hypocrisy sets in.

Even before the sword, the weapon *par excellence* of the gentleman, that had suffered so many gradual losses of size and weight according to the varying habits of different epochs, had been finally abandoned, the ladies of the great world had brought fashion into utter and complete ridicule. The extravagance of their toilets, and particularly of their *coiffures*, passes the bounds of positive madness. Both sexes about 1780 are lavish and luxurious, but their luxury lies all in the direction of the mean and trashy. It displays itself in gauzy materials, and spangles and tinsel ; while « Embroideries as applied to dress disappear flower by flower. » Pleasure, now grown morbid and

unhealthy, fails in zest, droops and languishes. Wit loses its *verve*, its fine ease and elegance, and the duel its correct and graceful conduct. *Courtesy*, already described by Richelet in his Dictionary of 1680 as an « old fashioned word, » — courtesy, child of the fine old Gallic urbanity of an earlier age, is soon to disappear altogether. The English had seen and admired it at the Battle of Fontenoy ; but they will look in vain for it, — the fact is notorious, — at Waterloo. The final word of that battle has, in these last days, become *parliamentary* (1). It only shows (among the lower classes) how low politeness has fallen, — a degradation due to women and the gradual corruption introduced by them.

The forms of respect usual with women are now no more than a pretence. Ladies in general exact them only as a matter of etiquette ; for in their eyes respect from a man implies contempt for their attractions or the idea that they are no longer young. There are of course sundry marks of deference prescribed by custom in the world of the drawing-room, where they are rigorously exacted under the dictates of self-interest and pleasure, — like the knot of ribbon, always the gift of a lady, which the *roués* used to carry attached to the sword-hilt. Generally speaking a

(1) It will be remembered that the memorable expression of Cambronne at the Battle of Waterloo was introduced into parliamentary language in the Chamber (July 1879) by a certain Deputy of the Left.

custom survives the belief that originated it ; but though the form remains the same, the soul is gone. Do we not see at the present moment the waggoner, with an oath in his teeth all the while, tie on at his horse's ear the branch of box that tells us it is Palm-Sunday ?

Towards the end of the last Century, before the assassinations of July (1), when one abominable fury actually devoured Major de Belsunce's heart (the atrocious act embodies a sort of allegory after all), the ladies of high life, as we have observed before, had by their own fault quite lost all consideration, and this not only in France but in other countries as well. A learned and famous philosopher, a son of Germany, the land where woman was worshipped as a divinity at the time when Tacitus wrote, has ventured to pronounce : « The *Lady*, as the phrase is, occupies an utterly false position, for women are not made to inspire veneration or receive homage » (2).

(1) *Mercure de France,* Sept. 26, 1789. Correspondence of the Officers of the Bourbon regiment and members of the *Comité Général* of Caen. — Floquet, vol. VII.

(2) « Women have no rank. » Chamfort observes moreover very justly : « They are created to deal with our weaknesses, our infatuation, but not with our reason. There exist between them and mankind sympathies of the skin, very few of mind, soul or character. » « Women are the *sexus sequior* (secondary sex), the sex that comes second in all respects, made to keep under cover and in the back-ground. No doubt it is right to spare their weakness, but it is absurd to pay them

Suchlike theories naturally appealed to *the monstrous beast*, « the great stupid, » as Voltaire called it, and it was while actively contributing to their general adoption that the ruined and degraded tribe of the old nobility was annihilated. They no longer carried sword, or had muscles to wield it; how could they de-

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homage, and doing so simply degrades us in their eyes. Nature, when she divided the human species into two categories, did not make the parts equal.... — The Ancients and the Eastern nations have thought so all along; they better understood the rôle suitable to women than do we with our gallantry after the old French fashion and our silly veneration, which is merely the fullest, most complete development of German-Christian infatuation. All this has simply served to make them so overbearing and insolent as they are; sometimes they remind me strongly of the apes of Benares, who are so well aware of their sacrosanct dignity and inviolability that they think they may do exactly what they please. »

« Woman in the West, under the guise that is of the so-called *lady*, is in an utterly false position, for women, the *sexus sequior* of Classical writers, are in no wise made to inspire veneration and receive homage, — neither to carry their heads higher than men, nor yet to enjoy rights equal to his. The effects of this false position are only too plain. It is much to be wished that in Europe this *number two* of the human species might be relegated to her proper place, and the *lady*, an object of raillery to the whole of Asia, and a figure that Greece and Rome would equally have mocked at, suppressed altogether. » — SCHOPENHAUER, *Reflexions and Maxims*.

fend themselves, when Revolution came? (1).

To the being, once so fondly cherished, who gay and wanton still stood by at this piteous catastrophé of an effete system, one which had originally ennobled and made her an object of respect to all, to this being the old world in its death throes might have said in the words of Catullus lying exhausted in the arms of Lesbia : « 'Tis by your fault I die ; I love you yet in spite of all, but respect you I cannot ! »

« Men no longer fight for women ; their conduct has made such combats ridiculous, » wrote

(1) « Education, that all-powerful agent, has repressed, softened, weakened instinct itself. In face of instant death, they feel no sudden uncontrollable spasm of the blood, no passion of anger, no universal and immediate rally of all the forces, no access of murderous fury, no blind, irresistible need to strike the striker back. The spectacle is unknown of a noble on his arrest breaking the Jacobin's head who has come to take him. » Here is an instance of what might have been effected by armed resistance on the part of each individual in his own house and fighting for his own hand. « A man of quality of Marseilles, forced to retire to his country house (bastide) and proscribed, armed himself with a musket, a brace of pistols and a sabre, never went out without these weapons, and declared no man should take him alive. No one ever ventured to execute the warrant of arrest. » — Anne Plumtree, A Residence of Three Years in France (1802-1805), II. — H. Taine, *Les Origines de la France contemporaine*, L'Ancien Régime.

Mercier in 1782, in his *Tableau de Paris* (1). To this pitch of utter degradation has come at long last the ideal and idol of the past ; and thus at the same time that the weapon of men of honour attains its extreme of smallness and slenderness, ends the period of the « men of pleasure », that *libertine* Age, which the relics of former days, the tottering, painted dames who survived the storm, called with a fine effrontery of conviction « the good old times. »

Now one last word as to the first and proudest ensign of nobility. After having weighed « fourteen pounds, » like the sword of Alonzo de Cespède, « ten pounds, eight ounces, » like the great Dietrich von Bern's (Theodoric's) broad-sword, « nine pounds, fixe Saxon *loth*, » like the blade of Conrad Schenk von Winterstetten (2), or « five pounds, twenty-three ounces, » like the brand of Scanderbeg, who would cleave a man bodily in twain, or according to a Crusaders' saying, « make two Arabs out of one, » — the sword, soul of primitive Gallic battle-frenzy, the sword, mother and

(1) L. S. Mercier, *Tableau de Paris* (Picture of Paris), 1782-88. Amsterdam, 11 vols. 8vo.

(2) The sword of the Suabian Knight Conrad Schenk von Winterstetten who died in 1242, weighed nine pounds, five Saxon *loth*.

On the blade are engraved the words : « Give this with my remembrance to the very worthy Conrad von Winterstetten, that noble heart; leave never a cap of mail entire. » —— F. A. Frengel. *Historical Museum at Dresden.*

queen of all other weapons, to follow the expressions of Henry de Sainct-Didier (1) and Perez de Mendoza (2), is almost everywhere abandoned.

It ceases to be an incarnation, a symbol; it ceases to exist in any true sense. The nobility of all countries, now fallen to utter decay, suddenly disarms of its own accord. — and this really and truly of its own proper inclination.

Previously to the troubles of 1790, the man of rank sinks his own prerogatives. Sometimes he shows himself at Court even without sword, « dressed simply *en polisson* (like a common blackguard) », reports a tourist of the time with unfeigned astonishment.

In a newspaper of 1759, *la Feuille nécessaire* (3) occurs the following paragraph, highly significant in connexion with the last end of the Sword and of the old system of things, « Our ancestors, habituated to fatigue, used to fight with heavy arms, swords of a weight their de-

(1) *Traicté contenant les secrets du premier livre sur l'espée seule, mère de toutes armes*, etc. (Treatise containing the Secrets of the first Book on the single Sword, mother of all weapons, etc.) Henry de Sainct-Didier, a Gentleman of Provence. Paris, Mettayer, 1573.

(2) Espada es Reina de todas las armas, — The Sword the Queen of all Weapons. — Don Miguel Perez de Mendoza, *Resumen de la verdadera destreza de las armas* (Compendium of the True Mastery of Arms), Madrid, 1675.

(3) *La Feuille nécessaire* (The Indispensable Sheet), Journal containing various particulars in connexion with Science, Letters and Art, p. 106, Article *Industrie*, Paris 1759.

scendants could barely lift. Light as are the weapons of to-day, our delicate-handed comtemporaries find them even yet too heavy, and look upon an ordinary sword with its sword-belt as an oppressive additional burden to carry. To relieve them of this inconvenient weight and minister to the prevailing taste, the sword-makers have found means to mount an extremely light blade in a guard of open filigree work of steel, in which very little solid metal is left at all. These swords, damascened or inlaid with gold in various colours, are to be obtained at two different emporiums, — *La Grande Garde* in the Rue Saint-Honoré and the *Quatres Fils Aymon* on the Pont-au-Change. They need, to carry them at the wearer's side, only a pair of little silk bands fastened to the sheath by two rings and hanging from the girdle by two little hooks. The whole contrivance, they say, is not much heavier than a lady's fan. »

Thus ends the Sword.

LADIES AS DUELLISTS

From the « Histoire Anecdotique du Duel" of Émile Colombey, and « Les Duels célèbres » of the Baron de Vaux.

Gallant Ladies (1).

Tallemant in his comprehensive Works on Duelling speaks amongst other things of « Gallant Ladies, » — this is the established and classical phrase. His first story is of a certain virago, wife of M. de Château-Guy, of Murat, who « was generally to be seen on horseback, wearing huge top-boats, kilted skirts and a man's wide brimmed hat with steel trimmings and feathers to crown all, sword by side and pistols at saddle-bow. »

She had shown some predilection for a Mons. de Codières, and the said young Auvergnat nobleman having roused her jealousy, she challenged him to single combat. He came on the field with a mocking nonchalant air, and at first merely played with his weapon. But he very soon found the fair lady's

(1) See also above Part II, ch. 3, note p. 100.

caprice aimed at nothing less than sending him to rejoin his noble ancestors dead and gone. Her fence was both strong and determined, her point for ever directed to the *good places*. Seeing this, he presently quitted fooling and pressed her in earnest, — not intending to wound her but to tire her out and oblige her to cry mercy. She held out however till she actually fell fainting to the ground. Simultaneously her rancour vanished : and she seemed radiant with delight at having been beaten. The combat had expressed the judgement of Heaven, and proved Codières innocent. All her suspicions were removed and her affection restored.

The same amiable but strong-minded lady next sought to fix a quarrel on certain gentlemen of her neighhourhood, MM. de Gave. She had a spite against them. no one knew why. At any rate it so happened one day that meeting them at the chase, she rode straight at them. Her squire shouted warningly :

« Back, Madam; they are three to one. »

« What matter ? » she retorted. « I will never have it said I encountered them without attacking them. »

Accordingly she continued her onward course, and the three gentlemen were cowardly enough to kill her.

« Her sister, » adds Tallemant, « who was not so handsome as she was, but to make up for it,

was even more *warlike*,— indeed all but a madwoman. She married first of all a gentleman of the name of La Douze. She was then very young ; and he used occasionally to beat her. Eventually he grew gouty, and she tall and strong ; then in her turn *she* beat *him*. After his death, she married Bonneval, of Limosin. She would have liked to do the same with him, and she did actually challenge him to a duel. He determined to gratify and cure her caprice ; and the pair soon found themselves shut up together in a room of which he had locked the door. They fought, and he gave her two or three good sword-thrusts to teach her sense. Then this second husband also died. She was already old, and began to paint, — for she was something of a coquette still, — and the effect was appalling.

A gentleman of Toulouse, named La Citardie, who held the office of King's falconer at Court, went to visit her. It was winter-time ; and they deposited in his room a beetle and wedge for splitting heavy wood and a bill-hook for cutting faggots. This was how the warming was done. There was not a door that locked in the whole house, and the woods were a safer place. She made him spend all the evening after supper in snuffing a candle with arquebuses ; and because he had proved himself the better shot, she had his arquebus broken when he was asleep. For three days running she pursued one of her relatives, who had dared to pass near her abode without paying his respects, and sub-

sequently she sent him a challenge". Something like life, this !

Madame de Saint-Balmont may very well figure beside these two worthies without fear of loss by the comparison. She was from the Barrois district. On the death of her husband, who had been killed in the service of the Duke of Lorraine, she had made up her mind to rule her estates herself, and in order to inspect everything with her own eyes, she was almost constantly on horseback. Her costume was adapted to the part she played, a hat with blue plumes, a cravat, a jerkin and breeches, and a man's gauntlets; such was her caparison, completed by hair cut to correspond. When she was dismounted, a skirt was added to the jerkin, and the top-boots gave place to very low-heeled shoes. Short of stature, she did not wish to appear taller than she actually was. At any rate this is what she said; but perhaps really and truly it was an instinct of self-preservation prevented her wearing women's high-heeled shoes, for otherwise the brusque impetuosity of movement that was habitual with her would have given her many a fall. At the assault on a Castle, she joined the escalade and being abandoned by her men, she never hesitated to push her way in pistol in hand, and bursting furiously into a room where seventeen men-at-arms were mustered, she disarmed them all...

Mme de Saint-Balmont was no less devout than brave, and besides all this something of a poetess,

— too much of one we may say, for her literary sins went the length of two Tragedies. She possessed, spite of Melpomené, a ready wit, never left off talking for one moment and had invented for days of high spirits a sort of gibberish composed half of German half of French, which she reeled off with a charming vivacity. Her manner was engaging, and had only one fault, excessive gesticulation. But here again she merely showed the man that was innate in her.

« When she set to in earnest, you had to keep your head for all you were worth, or better run away. » She killed or took more than 400 men. « When Erlach (1) marched into Champagne, she started out alone to attack three German horsemen who were for unharnessing the horses from a plough in her fields, and held them till her own people came up. She escaped, and presently when her escapade was well forgotten, appeared one fine day at the Opera, under the helmet of Pallas in *Cadmus*. She met with an enthusuastic reception; true, her dancing left much to be desired, but then she wielded Athené's spear with such an air !

« She broke her own horses, and consequently was always excellently mounted. Imagine then her fury, when she was played the following trick ! A gentleman whom she had challenged to the field of honour and whose courage was well known and beyond reproach, came to the place agreed upon mounted on a broken down carthorse.

(1) Governor of Brisach, and Marshal of France.

On seeing the lady, « Madam, » said he, « pray, dismount ! ».

Mme. de Saint-Balmont fell into the trap. Hardly was she out of the saddle before the other leapt on her horse's back and away, leaving behind his own sorry beast in pledge.

We cannot omit La Beaupré without wounding her feelings from our gallery of *gallant* dames. She fought a duel actually on the stage with her colleague Mlle Des Urlis. After an exchange of sundry forcible epithets, La Beaupré had defied her rival and gone to procure a pair of naked swords. Catherine des Urlins seized one, thinking it was a game ; but the fair Fury attacked her savagely, wounded her in the neck and would have killed her, had they not been separated.

To conclude, we give a short quotation from Guy Patin :

« Paris is talking of two Court-ladies who have been fighting a duel with pistols. The King is reported to have said with a laugh à propos of this, that he had only forbidden *men* to fight duels ».

« Mademoiselle de Maupin »

The notorious Mlle de Maupin the very day after her marriage got her husband a post in the Taxes and turned her back upon him, to scour the country with a master-at-arms of the name of Sésane, who had taught her fencing. The fond

pair tried to make a living by giving exhibitions of skill with the foils, but finding this would not pay, went on the stage. La Maupin was not long in sending the lover to keep company with the husband. The fact is she had now fallen victim to a strange passion for a young girl of ravishing beauty. But the young lady in question had clear-sighted relatives who soon put the wall of a Convent between her and La Maupin. The latter was not one to accept defeat ; she set fire to the Convent and carried off the Novice. The blow struck, she had to fly the pursuit of outraged justice, the law being set upon burning her alive, — nothing more nor less.

The cudgel too was one of her weapons, as her colleague Dumesnil could vouch for. He had spoken ill of the lady, finding fault with her ways and laughing at her eccentric mode of life. Well ! La Maupin said not a word ; she preferred *doing*. One evening, dressed like a man and wearing a great hat that came down over her eyes, she waited for her man in the Place des Victoires, which he had to cross on his way from the Theatre. The instant he appeared, she thrust the point of her sword in his face, calling on him to draw. Dumesnil, who was not of a warlike spirit, making as if to pass on, she sheathed her weapon and made play with a stick she had kept in reserve. Then she took the poor creature's watch and snuff-box, intending to use them as evidence, if needful.

Next day at the Opera, as Dumesnil was bitter-

ly complaining how he had been assailed by a gang of thieves who had robbed him, she told him to his face :

« You are telling a lie. — *I* was the gang of thieves, and no one else. I gave you a thrashing because you were afraid to fight when I asked you, And the proof of what I say is here, — your watch and snuff-box, which I hereby return to you ».

La Maupin was always willing and ready to draw the sword. One night she had the caprice at a public ball to make eyes at a lady attended by three gentlemen. The latter challenged her, supposing they had to do with a man, for she used never to wear the dress of her own sex. They left the ball-room, and la Maupin killed the three men one after the other. She got off with nothing worse than a short sojourn over the frontier in Belgium.

Théophile Gautier has written a novel under the name of *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, which in spite of the difficulties surrounding the subject has won a wide-spread popularity.

Duel between a Member of the corps de Ballet and a Singer at the Opera.

Rivalry in love brought about a meeting in the Bois de Boulogne between a dancer of the Opera, Mlle Théodore, and Mlle Beauménil, a singer at the same Theatre. The former had as seconds Mlles Fel and Charmoy, the latter Mlles Guimard

and Geslin. The affair was to be decided with pistols. The two adversaries, dressed in long riding-habits, were just aiming when their colleague Rey arrived on the spot. He was bass-singer at the Opera ; and at once threw himself between the two. He made a long and most affecting speech, but only succeeded in making the silly creatures more angry. However, while orating, he had got hold of the pistols and laid them down in a damp place. They would not go off, and the two rivals were eventually persuaded to kiss and make friends.

A modern Duel between women.

Duelling between women is to the last degree uncommon in France, especially nowadays when the race of the *Richelieus* has disappeared. After much research, we have succeeded at last in unearthing an instance in the Department of the Gironde.

Two of those « foolish virgins » whom *Gil-Blas* is wont to designate under the delightful name of *turtle-doves*, or more brutally *horizontals*, were rivals for the heart and purse of a young landed proprietor, the Comte de G . . . . é, and as both were frequenters of the shooting gallery, a duel with pistols was arranged between them.

The meeting took place in the Forest of Pessac, and the two combatants had directed their seconds to carry on the struggle to the bitter end.

The distance was to be twenty paces, and they

were to exchange two shots; if no result followed, the contest to be continued with foils.

The four seconds, young men of fashion of the town, drew up the *procès verbal* given below. It is found printed at length in the columns of the *Bordelais* of 1868.

They drove to the ground in open carriages. At the first shot Marie M. . . ., *professionally* known as Henriette de Saint-P. . . , having been wounded in the hip, the seconds put an end to the combat.

The Law bestirred itself in the matter, and prosecutions were instituted against both seconds and principals. All were condemned to a fortnight's imprisonment.

Some years after, one of the fair duellists was living in Paris, playing in comedy and farce at one of the theatres of the Capital. Tall and good-looking, she would gladly have repeated the exploits of Adèle Page, who once thinking herself deeply offended at the familiarity with which an old General had treated her, sent him next day a piece of cardboard, the bull's eye of which she had shot out at thirty paces.

As to the other, she has forsaken *love*, and all its « pomps and vanities. » She is married and lives in great retirement. She is one of the chief « ladies bountiful » of her district.

We reprint the procès-verbal of the encounter:

« Fourth of May 1868, at two o'clock in the afternoon, we the undersigned having met to inquire

into the quarrel unfortunately subsisting between Madame Marie P. . . . ., known as Henriette de Saint-P. . . . , and Madame Aimée R. . . . , and having recognized that any arrangement of the matter was impossible, decided that a meeting should take place under the subjoined conditions, viz.

The duel will be fought with pistols at twenty paces, two shots being exchanged, on the fifth May, at two o'clock, in the Forest of Pessac.

The above-stated conditions have been submitted to the parties concerned. The latter have ratified the same, promising to adhere to them in all particulars.

Bordeaux, the fourth of May 1868.

Seconds acting for	Seconds acting for
Mme. de St.-P.	Mme. Aimée R.
Henri de G....	Alfred Huet.
Paul de V....	Paul B....e.

N. B. — Most of these gentlemen being still alive, only initials have been given.

A WOMAN'S SECRET

From « Les Drames de l'épée » of Théodore de Grave.

Is it fair to accuse our Century, as so many detractors of modern days do, of being incompatible with great deeds, generous sentiments and noble aspirations?

For my own part, — but then I am old-fashioned and simple-minded, — I am firmly persuaded that it deserves on the contrary a diametrically opposite appreciation, and that justice demands it should receive its meed of praise rather than of blame. Believe me, we are neither better nor worse than our fathers. The only real difficulty is to discover the wheat among the tares; but nowadays no less than heretofore he who searches carefully will find. Be this as it may, I propose to narrate a deed of courage, which it is true was done in our own days, when black coat and white tie are in the ascendant, but which none the less was as much an act of gallant heroism as any of the noble examples history gives us among the sons of Lacedaemon.

Fair ladies, married and single, you may draw up your chairs; the tale is specially dedicated to you. Nevertheless should there be any amiable

and gentle swains among you, never expel them; my narrative may equally well be heard by their chaste ears too.

So much by way of preface; and now to my story.

During the winter of 18.., one evening of carnival week, there were high festivities a-foot in one of the most popular and fashionable houses frequented by the best families of Bordeaux, families as good or better than those of most cities.

Albeit chosen with the minute care and exclusiveness demanded of a hostess descended from the Crusaders, the guests were nevertheless very numerous. Moreover they seemed one and all mutually acquainted, and conversed familiarly with each other, as folks should who were all in accord in keeping up the pious memory of the good Saint Louis. All Bordeaux possessed of ancient names and high lineage, men and women, old and young, met there each recurring winter; for provincial as it was, the house had no small air of fashion about it, while its owners welcomed their guests with a charming hospitality. Even the servants, of course showing something of the arrogant mien that will always go with a grand livery, were for all that hardly ever rude.

What was particularly attractive in the eyes of the young people was the number of dances, and the consequent opportunities for good matches. The word marriage was seldom heard; nevertheless marriages often resulted, and highly suitable ones, — in the matter of proper quarterings of nobility,

if not always of age. For these reasons prudent mothers made it as much a point to take their daughters there as to go to Church on Sundays. Indeed in the eyes of many excellent women, a ball *is* a sort of sacrament.

Accordingly on the evening in question great doings were on foot. All was animation, and the whole house was in such a blaze of light it might have been a display of fireworks in honour of a King's birthday. The magnificent suite of rooms, decked with flowers and crowded with young and pretty women, presented the appearance of a superb, richly-chased casket reflecting from a thousand facets the brilliant flashing lights of the illumination. The orchestra played the most entrancing airs ; all was ease and gaity, — all the more so that it never entered the head of a single soul of all the company to mention the sore subject of politics ; for the guests were persons not only of high birth but of wit and sense.

However when we say *all* were gay, we are guilty of exaggeration. Amidst the merry and well-bred crowd, a young man of 25 at the most, had been for some time pacing to and fro in the rooms, alone and with a look of profound *ennui* in all his bearing. This certainly showed a great want of respect for his surroundings, we are bound to admit; but so it was.

Still from time to time he would wring a friend's hand, bow to one lady, throw a smile of

greeting to another, all the while steering skilfully in and out amid the intricacies of the modish waters. This be it allowed, is no easy task to accomplish successfully by one whom the winds of chance blow back once more to these perilous seas after several years of absence.

It was now three years ago since our returned exile had quitted Bordeaux for the Colonies, where he had been detained by family business of importance. He bore the well-known name of Comte Didier de Labrède, and on the instant almost of landing had hastened back to revisit his old haunts, solely and entirely with the purpose of discovering whether or no he had been completely forgotten in the lapse of time.

After so long an absence, to do so was to run great risk of a disappointment.

He was therefore by no means an utter stranger there, as anyone might have supposed who had watched him wandering at hap-hazard through the rooms, never stopping more than a minute or two to converse with such acquaintances as shook him by the hand. Far from it, he had been *very much in the swim*, as the phrase goes, previous to his departure; but then three whole years away! what can you expect after such an eternity? Naturally he had to get his hand in again. So, like the capable sailor he was, he wished first of all to get his bearings and take some soundings of his whereabouts.

He was a cautious man by nature, and in the

course of his travels had acquired a good supply of worldly wisdom.

Still after an hour or more of the sort of healthy exercise that consists in skating adroitly betwixt the silken train of a dowager on the one side and the lace flounces of an *ingénue's* white frock on the other without stepping on either, he felt the need of repose; so seeing before him a suite of smaller rooms less brilliantly illuminated than the great *salons*, he started forth bravely on a voyage of discovery.

After wandering for some minutes, he eventually found himself in a small drawing-room very daintily furnished and prettily decorated. At this distance away the airs of the orchestra were audible only with considerable breaches of continuity, or so to speak in *gusts* of music.

It was exactly the sort of place Monsieur de Labrède had been hunting for; and he said to himself as he looked round, « Why! very nice indeed! »

He was just proceeding to make himself comfortable when he noticed on his right a door opening directly on another little boudoir, darker, more fragrant and more retired from the music even than the first. It was quite a find, the *beau idéal* of a cosy corner.

« Why! nicer and nicer, » the Sybarite murmured, entering and examining the charming retreat quite *à la* connoisseur of such things.

In truth the presiding spirit seemed one of discreet and alluring mystery. A few artistic

curiosities of great rarity and some exotic plants were the sole ornaments. The furniture consisted of a large and luxurious sofa extending the whole length of one side of the room and a *marqueterie* table in the middle of the floor. On this table stood fragrant pastilles, and a lamp of antique shape that must have rested for many a long year on the high altar of some Pagan shrine. Mind! we are guilty of no anachronism, critical reader!

Didier marked the sofa, closed the door facing the corner so as not to be caught unawares by anyone coming in unexpectedly, and stretched himself at full length to indulge his dreams at leisure while waiting for the supper hour.

« When supper time does come, » Didier thought, « we will go and see whether our host's Château-Margaux and Château-Laffite are as good as they used to be. » — for he was by no means indifferent to the *good things* of this life.

For all that the Comte Didier de Labrède was, I assure you, a very handsome young man, one of those attractive, sympathetic persons, self-respecting and refined, that men envy and women fall in love with. He was tall and slim, of distinguished manners and brilliant wit, young, strong and healthy, — altogether a man who drank deep of the joys of living. Affected melancholy or causeless mirth were alike foreign to his nature; his was a richly endowed character, a frank, free disposition, self-sufficing and good for other men to contemplate.

Yet more, — wonder of wonders! — though both rich and handsome, he was neither stupid nor conceited. Surely a unique specimen!

He had been lying only a very few seconds on the couch when to his great surprise he heard from a neighbouring room the mysterious *frou-frou* of a woman's dress; then next moment the decided tread of a man, in all likelihood treading close on the skirts of the said dress.

At first Monsieur de Labrède paid no attention to what he heard. All the doors stood open; there was nothing to lead one to suppose any mystery, and so far from trying to pry upon the couple who had just revealed the fact of their presence, he remained in the same attitude as before, making up his mind to do his best to overhear nothing of their conversation.

But hardly had he finished these mental resolutions when the following words forced him to be an involuntary listener:

« Oh! Henri, » said a woman's voice in a tone vibrating with emotion, « you are making me commit a very great imprudence by bringing me here; any moment my husband might come upon us, and that would cause great unhappiness. »

« I wanted to speak to you, Marguerite, for the last time alone, — to give you my last farewell; » replied in an anguished voice the other, whom she had called Henri.

And Monsieur de Labrède gathered from the slight

noises proceeding from the neighbouring room that the two speakers had sat down. His native honour at once suggested he ought to announce his position by some sound; it went against the grain to be thus, in spite of himself, the unseen depositary of confidences he could not help overhearing. But already it was too late to do anything; the conversation had begun afresh, and this in so sad and mournful a strain that Didier was afraid to startle the speakers by an interruption.

« You are unreasonable, my poor unhappy Henri, » the same woman's voice went on. You know better than anyone the sad conditions under which I married. You know I never loved my husband and never shall love him; that when I married him, I had to choose between the ruin of my family and my own unhappiness... I sacrificed myself without a moment's hesitation to save my father. And I hoped that you, Henri, you I love so truly, would be the first and foremost to make my sacrifice easier by giving an example of resignation. Yet again and again you come to revive my pain, and throw up my marriage against me... »

« Oh! Marguerite, Marguerite! » cried the man's voice in accents that betrayed the delirium of his grief; « I love you like a madman, like one demented, in a word like a lover frantic with jealousy! I know I do wrong to pursue you as I have to the very houses you visit as a guest... but you were my only, only love... For you I would have

given all, sacrificed all, dared all, » he went on. Then after a pause, « and if it had to be, I would have descended even to crime to win you...»

« Oh ! hush, hush ! unhappy man ! » the girl exclaimed in terror.

« Ah ! well, » he continued in a calmer tone, » « you are right, I am a demented fool. But then, I love you so, with so great a love, so pure, so true... Nothing in the world, I feel it, can ever fill its place; nothing ever lessen it... Come, forgive me, Marguerite, for having grieved you so. Look, I am reasonable again ; besides, I only asked you to grant me this final interview because I am going away, I am going to leave you, you who are all I care for, all I shall ever care for !... So you will not scold me, will you, Marguerite ? If I have vexed you, you so pure and good, I ask your pardon on my knees; if ever voluntarily or involuntarily I have caused you one pang, made you shed one tear, pity me and remember how miserably unhappy I was...

At this moment Didier, the enforced hearer of the heartrending interview, caught the sound of stifled sobs. The lovers were weeping, mingling their sorrow and their tears, — last union of two unhappy hearts divided by human laws, but joined by the divine right of love and suffering !

Monsieur de Labrède listened, half rising from the couch, his head resting on his hand, — listened from no motive of idle curiosity, but rather with a feeling of respectful and heartfelt sympathy

with the scene of tenderness and grief that was being enacted so near him.

There was something at once of dignity and worth about these tears and tender reproaches; while the very air seemed impregnated with a fine perfume of youth and purity that did the heart good and refreshed the soul. Didier could not help thinking: « Alone as they are now, young and in love, what should hinder them from taking advantage of their opportunity, from gratifying their longings at any rate by some pledge of love, an embrace, a kiss? »

But no ! their passion was too great and holy to condescend to suchlike weakness. Each knew the other worthy, and so they had met without constraint or shame And had they not wept together, these two unhappy beings ?

Sceptics may laugh, but when true love is involved with such bitter pain, God surely watches over the hearts that feel its torments.

« I thank you, Henri, » Marguerite resumed in a voice still choked by sobs, after a moment of silence. Your resolve is worthy of you, and believe me, I appreciate its nobleness as it deserves, but I am not so selfish as to put my own peace and tranquillity above everything else, and I cannot forget you have a mother who loves you. Will not your absence cause her much unhappiness ? »

« I have told my mother , she understands my feelings and motives in going away. »

« Farewell then ! farewell, — perhaps for ever, »

the woman's voice replied, with a painful effort.

« Yes ! for ever, » repeated the man's in a calmer tone.

Then after a moment's silence, he resumed : « Before we separate for ever, Marguerite, I have a boon to ask ; suffer the unhappy man who is leaving you for ever to kiss your forehead, as a friend, as a brother. »

« Never ! no, never ! » exclaimed Marguerite emphatically. Let us remain what God has willed we should be, let us remain worthy of each other... Go, Henri, go now ! »

« I obey, Marguerite ; farewell once more, farewell for ever ! »

And next moment Didier heard the unhappy lover's departing footsteps, growing fainter and fainter in the distance of the spacious rooms.

Marguerite was left half swooning in an arm-chair.

« Well, well ! » said Didier to himself in the deep silence that ensued ; « here at any rate are two true gallant souls, resigned to suffer out their pain. Well do they merit their full share of happiness, but alas ! « a great gulf is fixed » betwixt them for ever. All the same, 'tis a fine thing to love so. Poor Marguerite ! — By-the-bye, « continued Labrède, » I know her name ; but deuce take me if ever I seek to know her face... I should hate to put so good a woman to the blush ! Ah ! ladies fair, why were you not all of you with me to hear these true hearts beat, and see these honourable tears ? what an example for you, fickle votaries of Love's mysteries ! »

He was at this point in his soliloquy, and was only waiting for Marguerite to go, to slip away himself, when the rustle of her ball-dress told him she was rising from the seat where she had been resting.

But judge of Didier's surprise and embarrassment when instead of her vanishing by the same way as Henri had done, he beheld her approaching the little boudoir where he himself lay *perdu*.

He would have sold his soul to the devil on the spot for the power to disappear without the lady's seeing him. Unfortunately the latter, wishing to find a quiet corner to recover in from her agitation, had had the unlucky inspiration to seek it in this particular room. On the very threshold she found herself face to face with Didier. Uttering a cry of amazement and dismay, she hid her face, saying in a broken, agitated voice :

« What! a stranger! Oh! sir, you were there ; you have heard all ? I am undone ! »

And she fell helpless on the couch, wildly repeating : « Undone, undone ! »

The Comte de Labrède was deeply affected by the pain and grief he witnessed. However, respecting her tears, he did not venture to reply at once. Only when some seconds had elapsed after her first cry of fear, did he make an efflort to reassure the poor girl.

Marguerite still lying exhausted, rather than sitting, on the couch, Didier full of sympathy and admiration for her youth and beauty, stepped back a pace or two, and dropping on his knee before her, said with an accent of profound devotion and sincerity :

« I speak to you, Madam, in the same way one

prays to the Holy Mother of Christ, — on my knees, because you are pure, and holy, and worthy of deepest respect. »

At his lowly attitude and true, feeling tones, she raised her head, and with a wondering but reassured air gazed curiously at the young stranger who thus accosted her in the most dignified language the human heart can find to use under such conditions.

« Oh ! rise, Sir ! » Marguerite said at once. I thank you for having understood so well all I suffer. »

The Comte rose from his knee.

« Madam, » he resumed, my name is the Comte de Labrède, and I hereby give you my word as a man of honour that whatever was spoken in yonder room I will never call to mind again »...

« Oh ! thank you ! » repeated Marguerite again, bursting into tears.

« No need to thank me, Madam; but promise me you will deign to forget how the merest chance made me against my will the confidant of your secret. We are destined doubtless to meet again in the same society, to be presented to each other... I should be in despair if ever my presence were to occasion you any embarrassment... Before you go, Madam, tell me you trust the word of the Comte de Labrède. »

« I do believe you, Sir ! » cried Marguerite in a burst of unfeigned enthusiasm ; I trust your word, your frankness and honour. You *have* removed my fears, Monsieur de Labrède ; I am no longer afraid, and I promise to meet you without feeling ashamed. »

« I thank you in my turn, Madam, for your

trust, and because you have not misunderstood my motives. »

« I am convinced, » she cried again, almost smiling and drying her eyes, « I am convinced my secret will be kept by you as surely as by myself. »

« More surely, Madam; for a woman may be led into a betrayal by fear or subterfuge, but a man would rather die than give it up. »

« Monsieur de Labrède. I wish before we part to tell you my name with my own lips. » exclaimed the now confident and trusting girl. « The Marquis de Preuil is my husband, once an Officer in the Household Brigade : and my maiden name was Marguerite de Courtenay.

« Your mother was a friend of mine, » said Didier.

« She is so to this day ! only my mother lives at a distance in a neighbouring Department. Now your hand, Monsieur de Labrède, and here is a sister's, » she cried, giving him her hand with the frank and free confidence of perfect trust.

Didier took her hand, and bowing low, kissed it respectfully.

At the same instant Marguerite gave a cry. De Labrède lifted his eyes; a man, his arms crossed on his chest, stood facing the young couple, fixing them with a withering gaze.

It was the Marquis de Preuil, Marguerite's husband.

There was a moment of profound silence. The poor girl, realizing the situation only too fully, stood shaking in every limb. The Comte de Labrède refrained from uttering a word till Monsieur de Preuil had spoken, that he might judge what turn this fresh complication was likely to take.

« So ! I find you with your lover, » cried the Marquis brutally, making a step towards his wife.

« How dare you ? . . . » was all the latter could say, in a voice vibrating with haughty indignation, and throwing on him a look that expressed all the scorn she felt.

« How can you speak so, Sir ! to an honourable lady ? » — Didier could not help the words.

« The lady is my wife, » retorted the Marquis, for you, her betrayer, — it is not for you to criticize my conduct. . . . Withdraw, Madam ; I want a few words of explanation with your friend ! »

The Marquise de Preuil tried to speak, but her husband stopped her, and taking her roughly by the arm, pushed her out of the room.

« Sir ! » said Didier to the Marquis, « you are acting like a cur. I own appearances are against us, but *nothing* should have led you for a moment to entertain such a doubt of Madame de Preuil's honour. That you may not for a moment suspect anything so shameful, let me tell you on the faith of a gentleman, this is the first time I

have ever had the honour of meeting the Marquise de Preuil. »

« And already you had got the length of squeezing hands ! » interrupted the husband sarcastically. . . .

« Enough, Sir ! enough of these protestations of innocence, or I shall think you are a coward. »

« You would be mistaken, Sir ! » answered the young man coldly. » Once more I assure you, I swear . . . »

« What ! again . . . Your name, Sir ! for, being unarmed, I must needs put off till to-morrow the melancholy duty of killing you. »

« As you please, Sir ! there is my name, » said Didier quietly, presenting his card. But for the love of heaven, » he went on, « hear me ! listen to me ! . . . . I declare solemnly, what you suspect is false, impossible, absurd. . . »

« Then explain, Sir ! » cried the Marquis with a sneer, « how, seeing this lady for the first time, she allowed you such a familiarity. I saw you kiss her hand, Sir ! » And he threw a questioning look at the young man.

« That is *my* secret, Sir ! and I cannot tell you... »

« And here is *my* last word to you : You are a coward, Sir ! I say it again, a coward ! »

With this the Marquis turned contemptuously on his heel and disappeared.

Monsieur de Labrède was thunder-struck, appalled, not at the prospect of the duel he must fight with the Marquis, — little did the brave fellow care for this,

— but at the unhappy chance, the fatality, that had struck down the poor lady at the very moment he imagined himself to have re-assured her and averted her shame. »

« Great Heavens ! » cried Didier in a tone of despair and discouragement, « How can God suffer such injustice to be ? »

With these words, he left the house and returned home.

Next morning very early, Monsieur de Labrède's valet entered his master's chamber to announce that a gentleman wished to speak with him at once.

« Who is the gentleman ? » he asked.

« This is his card, Sir ! » was the man's answer ; and the Comte read the name of Henri de Bachelle.

« I do not know the name ; however show him in ; » and the newcomer entered.

« I am, » he began, directly he saw Didier, « the man for whose sake you are to fight, Monsieur de Labrède. It is I who should this morning hold the sword or pistol chance has put in yours, in a cause for which I alone should wish to be responsible. In a word, I am he whose confidence you surprised involuntarily last night. »

« Good ! your name of Henri should have given me the clew. It is an unhappy business, Sir ! » Didier replied calmly. « It appears to me Chance interferes in many things that in no way

concern her. Tell me, I beg, the object of your visit. »

« Monsieur de Labrède, » Henri answered, « from the instant I learned the details of what passed, only one thing has occupied my thoughts, — to make the weight of this unfortunate matter rest once more on my own shoulders. »

« An impossibility, Sir! »

« I have been driven to admit it, now that I have had an opportunity of appreciating all the goodness and nobility of your conduct, and I at once abandoned my design. Only, hearing you had but just arrived from a long journey and thinking perhaps you might find a difficulty in procuring seconds, I wished to put myself at your disposal... »

« Forgive my interrupting you, » interposed Didier, « but before letting you go further, I am bound to tell you, you cannot act as my second in a meeting where the Marquis de Preuil is my adversary. Your relations with him forbid it, and I cannot possibly... »

« Forgive me in my turn for interrupting *you*, Monsieur de Labrède. I am delighted to find we both share the same feelings of delicacy on the point. It is not my own services I offer, but those of my friends. They are below, friends of mine but all of them unknown to Monsieur de Preuil. »

« Good! in that case I accept your offer, » said Didier, with a smile of pleasure to find another's heart as true and noble and as scrupulous as his own.

The two young men grasped each others' hands feelingly.

A few minutes more, and the Marquis's seconds were closeted with Didier. One of them, before opening negociations with Labrède's seconds, asked to speak to him in private.

« Sir ! » said the Marquis's second to Didier, as soon as they were alone, « Monsieur de Preuil has charged me to assure you that in case of your agreeing to explain to him the familiar terms existing between his wife and you, as you say you were not previously acquainted, he would not only withdraw from the duel, but would actually beg your pardon. The Marquise, who is ill and all but delirious, has pronounced a name which is not yours. Tell me frankly what it is. You, and you alone Sir ! can explain the mystery ; in the name of all you hold most sacred, tell me the truth. Otherwise, I warn you the Marquis will show no pity ; he will kill you like a dog. »

« Sir ! » returned Didier haughtily, showing the man to the door, « my seconds are below ; arrange matters with them, and do not ask such a question of a gentleman, whether he prefers his life to his honour. Go, Sir ! »

The conditions of the duel were arranged as follows :

They were to fight at 25 paces with pistols, each advancing on the other at discretion to the limit of ten paces.

If the first exchange were without effect, they were to fire a second time.

Monsieur de Preuil demanded the right of firing first as being the insulted party, — which was by the way contrary to all recognized rules, — and Monsieur de Labrède allowed it.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the meeting took place in a field near the road to Caudéran.

The two principals were both dressed in black, — black coat and trousers, and white tie.

On taking their stations they buttoned their coats close. The weapons were put in their hands, and the word given to fire.

The Marquis de Preuil counted his ten paces, and at the tenth halted. Then slowly lowering the muzzle of his pistol, he aimed and fired.

But Didier never stirred. The Marquis de Preuil gazed at him, and was evidently surprised.

In his turn Monsieur de Labrède himself advanced on Monsieur de Preuil. He stepped his ten paces as the latter had done, and presently the two opponents found themselves no more than five paces from each other. *But* there was only one loaded pistol between the two, and that was in Didier's hand.

The excitement among the seconds on either side was intense. Every moment they expected to see the Marquis fall a corpse; the minutes seemed like years.

Monsieur de Labrède, pale but still quite calm and master of himself, holding his pistol in the right

hand, proceeded to unbutton his coat with the left, then unfastened his waistcoat, and pointing to the right side of his breast, he said to the Marquis, almost in an undertone but with a very meaning intonation :

« Look, Sir ! *Am* I a coward ? »

The unhappy man pointed to a spot below his right breast, where the shirt was pierced, and stained, nay ! streaming with blood. He was shot full in the chest, wounded to the death !

And yet there he stood unflinching, as noble as ever and as undaunted. It was a terrible sight to see ; horrible to count the seconds as they slipped by, bearing away in their swift course one of the finest, most chivalrous characters of our days.

At last, when Didier had slowly and deliberately pointed out his wound to his opponent, as if to convince the latter that death left him ample time to avenge himself if he so wished, he threw the pistol contemptuously behind him, and stepping up to Monsieur de Preuil till he was close enough to speak to him without being overheard :

« And now, Sir ! » he said solemnly, « it is a dying man, dying at your hand, who tells you on his oath, — your wife is as unsullied as a Saint ! ».

With these words on his lips, Comte Didier de Labrède sank back in the arms of his seconds ; and gave back his gallant soul to God who gave it, bearing with him in his true heart unbetrayed and unrevealed *a woman's secret !*

A Celebrated Lady Fencer of To-day.

A word or two about a fair representative of the noble art of Swordsmanship in our own days will not be out of place. Miss Lowther is an Englishwoman, and one every Englishman has good reason to be proud of. True her method is French, — that of the modern French school of fence, which has made such giant strides of late years, but this only means it is effective, elegant and correct.

The Parisian *maîtres-d'armes* have always been famous, and of late, in answer to the ever-growing interest displayed in the sport, they have done wonders. The old pedantry, which clung for centuries about the *salles d'armes*, and which is so amusingly illustrated in many of the old treatises, especially those of the Italian and still more the Spanish professors of the art, has been relegated to the limbo of useless and forgotten absurdities, correct position assured, and attack and defence alike made far more strong and sure. Especially under the famous M. Spinnewyn, the duelling sword has been adopted in practice-bouts for its artificial substitute, the foil, and infinitely greater actuality and a much closer assim-

ilation to the conditions of an actual encounter given to fence.

Still much of Miss Lowther's education has been in England and under English fencers, this country is her home for most of the year, and here she has won many of her victories. She began her early lessons with a well-known exponent, Mr. William MacPherson (late Sergeant-Major of the Blues), who conducts a Fencing Academy in London of some 60 or 70 ladies of gentle birth. Later she practised under Adjutant Bell, of the Artillery School, as well as abroad with M. Desmette, one of the first fencers of Belgium.

The following extract from the Parisian « *Journal de Sport* » of June 9, 1898, relates to one of this lady's experiences, and a very diverting one :

A Lady Fencer (from our Correspondent' London, May 31, 1898.

A few days ago an English Journal published the report of an interview one of its staff had had with the famous lady fencer, Miss Lowther.

In the course of the conversation, according to the reporter, it would seem Miss Lowther remarked, « There is no one in England who really knows how to fence ».

The following day a letter appeared in the same Journal to this effect:

« Is Miss Lowther in serious earnest when she declares that no one in England knows how to fence » ?

Surely the statement is a little rash, coming from so young a lady, when a man of the calibre of Captain Hutton still treads our planet, — to say nothing of several other representatives of the graceful art of fence, who I dare say could teach even so formidable a personage as Miss Lowther a trick or two of the French or Italian methods she does not know. »

Sixte.

Quick as parry and thrust followed the counter-stroke in next days' impression :

« My daughter has shown me a letter signed « Sixte » which appeared in your columns yesterday, asking if Miss Lowther is really in earnest when she declares that « no one really knows how to fence in England. » This letter appears to have been provoked by an interview which you likewise published a few days since, and which, accurate enough in general outline, was not so in the particular instance to which your correspondant refers ; and my daughter is very glad to have an opportunity of correcting a statement which, as it stood, he very justly characterizes as being « a little rash ».

What she did say was this : » If compared with the French professors of the art, no one in England really knows how to fence. » I do not know whether Captain Hutton has authorized « Sixte » to throw down the gauntlet in his name ; but if this is so, I hasten to state that my daughter will be only too delighted to meet Captain Hutton, or any other

English gentleman, in a fair and honest encounter, before competent judges, and I shall be happy to contribute in her name to the Prince of Wales's Hospital Found a sum of fifty punds, if Miss Lowther is beaten, — on condition that her opponent will himself enter into a similar engagement. In this way perhaps we shall be able to find out which side will score the winning points. »

Francis W. Lowther

Meantime I had solicited Miss Lowther for an interview, which she was good enough to grant me. Accordingly I presented myself, at her home, the sumptuous residence she occupies in Pont Street, Belgravia, along with her father Captain Lowther.

Miss T. Lowther is a tall, handsome brunette, with blue eyes of great penetrative power. Educated in France, at the « Pensionnat des Ruches » at Fontainebleau, she has passed her *baccalauréat ès sciences* at the Sorbonne, and spends a part of every year in Paris. She speaks French with perfect correctness and ease.

Fencing, which she has studied since she was fifteen, is her favourite from of sport. She regards it as pre-eminently a fine art, and admires unreservedly the French method, believing it alone adequate for the formation of accomplished swordsmen.

It was the late much regretted Professor Ball, then Adjutant of the Practising School, who first put a

foil in her hand ; at present when in Paris she attends the classes of M. Desmedt.

It is a pleasure to hear her speak of the masters of the French school of fence. Many of these she has had opportunity to see in matches with the most highly vaunted of foreign fencers, not one of whom she declares can be compared with them.

The reply to the harmless challenge Captain Lowther proffered in his daughter's name was not slow to appear. One might have expected to see the gauntlet so frankly and boldly thrown down by a woman's hand picked up with enthusiastic readiness by more knights of the foil than even Miss Lowther would care to engage ; in France three hundred gallant swordsmen would have disputed for the honour and pleasure of meeting her in the fencing-room.

But we are not in France, and here things went differently. No other than Captain Hutton, the opponent specially designated in Miss Lowther's challenge, answered, in the pages of the Journal, in these terms :

« I have seen the letter of Captain Francis W. Lowther in your issue of to-day.

As regards the letter signed « Sixte, » Captain Lowther would seem to imagine it to have been written at my suggestion, — but this is not the case. I consider the letter in question impertinent at once towards the young lady and towards myself, and I seize this opportunity to remind

the Press at large of the fact that when a correspondent makes use of another person's name, without having received his permission to do so, he should be held liable to the obligation of appending to his communication his real name and address. Who is « Sixte » ? I have not the faintest notion indeed ; I have some reason for thinking his epistle may possibly have emanated from the pen of Captain Lowther himself !

The encounter proposed by Captain Lowther is out of the question. It assumes, in fact, the form of « an open wager, » which would at once bring the two parties concerned into conflict with the regulations of the Amateur Association for the Encouragement of Gymnastics and Fencing, and the effect of which would be to disqualify both of them as amateurs, and prevent their being accepted by the Association, after having thus deliberately broken its rules.

I suppose there is no amateur willing to incur this penalty.

I send you a copy of the Rules and Regulations of the Association. »

Alfred Hutton.

On the same day on which this letter appeared I happened to meet Miss Lowther in a Fencing Room, to which lovers of the foil resort to keep their hand in. She had just been made acquainted with its contents, and was much amused at this

way of replying to a challenge by appealing to a set of Rules. Nor was she able to comprehend what the connection could be between an Association of Amateurs and its championship trials on the one hand and the special and entirely private match she proposed on the other, it being understood that neither Captain Hutton nor herself were or intended to be competitors in any public contest whatever.

However, with a fine indifference and an instant oblivion of the incident, Miss Lowther proceeded to join issue with a fencer of no small gifts who was present. The latter did not spare her in any way, and I am bound to say that the advantage she had of him in the bout was of a sort to make the fencers of the opposite sex referred to above think twice before risking their reputation in a contest with a woman, and one so likely to *touch* them.

Miss Lowther possesses to perfection the correct bearing and the classical play of our French school ; her hand is light and true, and of an incomparable quickness. Her parry is accurate and clean, and her attack direct and marked by boldness and mastery. Her point flies to its aim like an arrow, and *touches* — at the end of the *thrust*, like the immortal Cyrano's rapier....

Amateurs, look to yourselves, — I do not mean the sort of « amateurs » likely to be dissuaded from replying to Miss Lowther's challenge by considerations... about Rules and Regulations!

— but such as are ready to meet her in the way she desires, viz. weapon in hand.

A. Paroissien.

In England Miss Lowther has crossed swords both with Mr. John Leslie and with the well-known authority on all matters connected with the sword and swordsmanship, Mr. Egerton Castle, at the London Fencing Club. In France she has engaged the celebrated Parisian swordswoman Madame Gabrielle, and shown herself incomparably the stronger and quicker fencer.

To any one who has seen this most graceful exponent of a graceful art, it is difficult to speak with due moderation. Her tall, elegant figure, well-knit by nature and trained to the highest degree of ease and suppleness by assiduous practice, her eyes bright and keen, with their look of conscious force and determination, her whole bearing, alert and active as a panther's, make up a picture not easily forgotten. Others more skilful in the technique of swordsmanship are better qualified to detail the peculiar excellencies of Miss Lowther's style ; but the veriest tyro cannot but be impressed, on seeing her engaged, by the lightning rapidity and vigour of her play, and the sense of power expressed in every attitude and every movement.

Miss Lowther strikes one as an incarnation, —

and a very fascinating one, — of dauntless determination and ready energy, and as a young lady even a brave man would be very loath to meet sword in hand, if sport were earnest and an insult were to be avenged.

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